

AMENDMENT OF SOLICITATION/MODIFICATION OF CONTRACT				1. Contract ID Code		Page of Pages	
2. AMENDMENT MODIFICATION NO. 0002		3. EFFECTIVE DATE MAR 01, 2013		4. REQUISITION/PURCHASE REQ. NO. EDOIES-12-000309		5. PROJECT NO. (if applicable)	
6. ISSUED BY Contracts & Acquisitions Mgt., Group D US Dept of Education, 550 12th St SW - 7th Floor Washington DC 20202-4230				7. ADMINISTERED BY (If other than item 6) See Block 6			
8. NAME AND ADDRESS OF CONTRACTOR (NO., Street, Country, State and ZIP Code)				(x)	9A. AMENDMENT OF SOLICITATION NO. ED-IES-12-R-0103		
				X	9B. DATED (SEE ITEM 11) NOV 30, 2012		
					10A. MODIFICATION OF CONTRACT/ORDER NO.		
					10B. DATED (SEE ITEM 13)		
CODE		FACILITY CODE					
<b>11. THIS ITEM ONLY APPLIES TO AMENDMENTS OF SOLICITATIONS</b>							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The above numbered solicitation is amended as set forth in item 14. The hour and date specified for receipt of offers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is extended, <input type="checkbox"/> is not extended. Offers must acknowledge receipt of this amendment prior to the hour and date specified in the solicitation or as amended, by one of the following methods: (a) By completing items 8 and 15, and returning <u>1</u> copies of amendment; (b) By acknowledging receipt of this amendment on each copy of the offer submitted; or (c) By separate letter or telegram which includes a reference to the solicitation and amendment numbers. FAILURE OF YOUR ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO BE RECEIVED AT THE PLACE DESIGNATED FOR THE RECEIPT OR OFFERS PRIOR TO THE HOUR AND DATE SPECIFIED MAY RESULT IN REJECTION OF YOUR OFFER. If by virtue of this amendment your desire to change an offer already submitted, such change may be made by telegram or letter, provided each telegram or letter makes reference to the solicitation and this amendment, and is received prior to the opening hour and date specified.							
12. ACCOUNTING AND APPROPRIATION DATA (If required) See Schedule							
<b>13. THIS ITEM ONLY APPLIES TO MODIFICATION OF CONTRACTS/ORDERS. IT MODIFIES THE CONTRACT/ORDER NO. AS DESCRIBED IN ITEM 14.</b>							
Check One	A. THIS CHANGE ORDER IS ISSUED PURSUANT TO: (Specify authority) THE CHANGES SET FORTH IN ITEM 14 ARE MADE IN THE CONTRACT ORDER NO. IN ITEM 10A.						
	B. THE ABOVE NUMBERED CONTRACT/ORDER IS MODIFIED TO REFLECT THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES (such as changes in paying office, appropriation date, etc) SET FORTH IN ITEM 14, PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY OF FAR 43.103(b).						
	C. THIS SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT IS ENTERED INTO PURSUANT TO AUTHORITY OF:						
	D. OTHER (Specify type of modification and authority)						
E. IMPORTANT: Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> is not, <input type="checkbox"/> is required to sign this document and return _____ copies to the issuing office.							
14. DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT/MODIFICATION (Organized by UCF section headings, including solicitation/contract subject matter where feasible) Amendment 0002 extends the proposal due date to May 3, 2013 at 2:00 pm ET. The revised date for Clarification Questions is March 8, 2013 at 12:30 pm ET.							
See continuation page(s) for full details of RFP changes.							
Except as provided herein, all terms and conditions of the document referenced in item 9A or 10A, as heretofore changed, remains unchanged and in full force and effect.							
15A. NAME AND TITLE OF SIGNER (Type or print)				16A. NAME AND TITLE OF CONTRACTING OFFICER (Type or print)			
				Veronica L. Price Contracting officer			
15B. CONTRACTOR/OFFEROR		15C. DATE SIGNED		16B. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA		16C. DATE SIGNED	
				Veronica Price		3/01/2013	
(Signature of person authorized to sign)				(Signature of Contracting Officer)			

Amendment 0002, ED-IES-12-R-0103

Amendment 0002 provides updates to Sections B, J, L, and M of the subject Request For Proposal (RFP) ED-IES-12-R-0103; and incorporates a description and instructions for the NEW Conflict of Interest Two-Phase Process.

1. Section B.4 Type of Contract - The summary break-out of Fixed Price and Cost-Reimbursement tasks has been updated to reflect revisions to Section J, Attachment A - Revised Performance Work Statement dated 03/01/2013.

The following Section J. List of Attachments are updated: Attachment A - Revised Performance Work Statement dated 03/01/2013; and Attachment H – Revised Pricing Schedule dated 03/01/2013.

2. Section L.10 Instructions to Offerors - updated to incorporate instructions and guidance for the NEW Conflict of Interest Two-Phase process.

3. Section M.2 Evaluation Criteria - updated to reflect the removal of all evaluation elements related to Section L/Appendix A instructions (Responsiveness to Design Issues) which has been deleted from the RFP.

All revised documents and RFP sections are hereby attached to this amendment. All other clauses, solicitation provisions and documents remain unchanged.

#### **B. 4 TYPE OF CONTRACT**

The Government contemplates award of a hybrid contract including both Fixed-Price tasks and Cost- Reimbursement tasks from this solicitation:

##### **Fixed Price Tasks:**

- Task 1: Meet with the Department
- Task 2: Identify and Convene a Technical Working Group (TWG)
- Task 3: Meet with Comprehensive Centers
- Task 5: Build Capacity within Centers to use the Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBM) or alternative framework
- Task 10: Prepare and Submit Documents to Information Review Board (IRB) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Approval of Data Collection Activities
- Task 13: Submit Progress Reports to the Department

##### **Cost Reimbursement Tasks:**

- Task 4: Develop, Implement and Refine a Common Results-Based-Monitoring System (RBM) template
  - Task 6: Develop and Analyze Customer Satisfaction Surveys
  - Task 7: Create and Manage Peer Review System
  - Task 8: Develop, Distribute, and Analyze Surveys for State Education Agencies (SEA) and Comprehensive Center Staff
  - Task 9: Conduct Interviews with State Education Agency (SEA) and Comprehensive Center staff
  - Task 11: Prepare and Disseminate Formative Reports to Centers
  - Task 12: Prepare Summative Reports
- The following is an optional task as referenced on page 37 of the Performance Work Statement (Attachment A) that may be exercised by the Government in the amount stated \$(TBD).
- Optional Task 14: Propose, Prepare, Implement and Report on Further Investigative Study Requiring Additional Data Collection (Cost Reimbursement).



**ATTACHMENT A**  
**Performance Work Statement**  
**EVALUATION OF THE**  
**COMPREHENSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS**  
**National Center for Education Evaluation**  
**Institute of Education Sciences**  
**U.S. Department of Education**  
**March 1, 2013**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The U.S. Department of Education (the Department), National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), in collaboration with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), requires a contract with a qualified entity to evaluate the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers over a 54 month period of performance. The Department may also choose to exercise one optional task to provide additional information for the study. If exercised, the optional task will begin and end within the 54 month period of performance.

The evaluation will include summative and formative components. It is intended to provide information on the overall quality, relevance, and usefulness of the Comprehensive Centers' technical assistance efforts and to provide useful feedback to Comprehensive Centers during the contract period. This formative component of the evaluation will involve a collaborative, iterative process among Comprehensive Centers, evaluator, and the Department to determine the most useful content and process for supporting Comprehensive Centers' continuous improvement.

### **A. Background**

#### **The Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers**

The Comprehensive Center Program, authorized by Title II of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA, Section 203)<sup>1</sup> is a discretionary grant program establishing technical assistance centers. The Comprehensive Centers provide technical assistance to "help State Education Agencies (SEAs) build their capacity to implement State-level initiatives and to support district- and school-level initiatives that improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction" (Notice of final priorities, requirements, and selection criteria, 2012).<sup>2</sup> On September 28, the Department announced 15 awards to Regional Centers serving specific states. Seven awards were made to Content Centers providing Regional Centers and states with in-depth content knowledge in one of each of the following areas: (1) standards and assessments implementation, (2) great teachers and leaders (3) school

<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/newccp/legislation.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-06-06/pdf/2012-13739.pdf>



turnaround, (4) enhancing early learning outcomes, (5) college- and career-readiness and success, (6) building state capacity and productivity, and (7) innovations in learning.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to 2005, Comprehensive Centers provided technical assistance directly to schools, districts, and states to support the implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. In 2005, the Department changed the focus of Comprehensive Centers' previous work in two ways. First, Comprehensive Centers were to work directly with state education agencies (SEAs) rather than with districts and schools. Second, instead of one type of Center, the composition of Comprehensive Centers changed to accommodate a two-tier approach to technical assistance. The majority of Comprehensive Centers, Regional Centers (RCs), were to provide technical assistance to designated states. A smaller number of Comprehensive Centers, Content Centers (CCs), were created and charged with working at the national level to provide in-depth knowledge to RCs and SEAs on a substantive educational area. For the most recently awarded Comprehensive Centers, the Department has kept the focus on SEAs and the two-tiered technical assistance model.

#### *Statute for Evaluating the Comprehensive Center Program*

Title II of the ETAA (Section 204) requires that the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), a component of the Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), provide for an ongoing independent evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers. The statute establishes the following specific goals for the evaluation:

- to analyze the services provided by the Centers
- to determine the extent to which each of the Centers meets the objectives of its respective plan
- to determine whether the services offered by each Center meet the educational needs of SEAs, local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools in the region.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Findings from the 2011 Comprehensive Center Evaluation*

Under the direction of NCEE, Branch Associates conducted an independent evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers' activities during the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 school years to meet the requirements of the statute. The final report provided a description of Center operations, reports on assistance delivery and contributions to state capacity, and ratings on quality, relevance, and usefulness of the Comprehensive Center activities (Turnbull, et. al., 2011; see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20114031/pdf/20114031.pdf> for full report.)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/education-department-awards-52-million-grants-23-comprehensive-centers-advance-r>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/newccp/legislation.html>

*Description of Center Operations:*

The evaluation study reported that Comprehensive Centers assessed state-level needs through several modes of interaction in order to develop annual management plans that directed their work for the year. In 2008-2009, all Centers (RCs and CCs) reported relying on informal assessments of state needs through communication with their primary clients (SEA staff or, in the case of CCs, RC staff). Other modes of interaction included communication with the chief state school officers (15 of the 21 Centers), surveys (13 of 21), and designated liaisons to SEAs (15 out of 16 RCs). Once client needs were established, the Comprehensive Centers engaged in several activities related to projects designed to meet those needs. Seven distinct types of activities were identified as comprising the majority of Comprehensive Center work: (1) ongoing consultation and follow-up, (2) research collections and syntheses, (3) engagement of participants in project planning, (4) training events, (5) task force meetings, (6) conferences, and (7) support for development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy. The study found that RCs engaged in 'ongoing consultation and follow up' more than any other activity, while the CCs engaged in 'research collections and syntheses' more often than other activities. Table 1 below shows the percentage of sampled projects for each type of Comprehensive Center in the last year of the evaluation (2008-2009).

**Table 1: Percent Projects that Included Specific Activities**

<b>Activities &amp; Resources in 2008-09</b>	<b>Percent of Sampled RC Projects<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Percent of sampled CC Projects</b>
Ongoing consultation and follow-up	91% <sup>6</sup>	62%
Research collections and syntheses	53%	77%
Engagement of participants in project planning	59%	27%
Training events	59%	50%
Task force meetings and work	56%	8%
Conferences	40%	38%
Support development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy	31%	23%

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 school year, 91% of sampled RC projects included ongoing consultation and follow-up.

Source: Turnbull, et. al., 2011, page 46.

**Evaluating the Comprehensive Centers for the 2013-2017 Grant Period**

The contractor shall carry out an evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers in fiscal years 2013-2017. The evaluation will have two main objectives: (1) to provide ongoing feedback to the Department and to the Comprehensive Centers in order for the Centers to adjust plans and improve their ability to enhance state capacity and meet intended outcomes throughout the grant period and (2) to provide information on the overall quality, relevance, and usefulness of Comprehensive Centers' work in order to advance

<sup>5</sup> The evaluation team defined "projects" as "a group of closely related activities and/or deliverables designed to achieve a specific outcome for a specific audience" (p 13).

<sup>6</sup> Sampled projects entailed multiple activities, so percentages do not equal 100%.

knowledge on effective ways in which to build state capacity. These objectives will be achieved through a study that includes formative and summative evaluation components.

## B. Key Research Questions

The evaluation is expected to not only answer questions about what the Centers do and how well they do it, but also if the Centers are doing the “right thing” in order to effectively build capacity at the SEA level. The questions below are organized based on the following simple logic model illustrating Comprehensive Centers’ order of operations (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Simple Logic Model of Comprehensive Centers**

Client Goals ➡ Objectives & Strategies ➡ Services & Products ➡ Outcomes

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For the purposes of this PWS, the terms listed below are defined as follows:

- ‘Client’ for RCs refers to the SEAs in their regions; ‘client’ for CCs refers to RCs and SEAs.
- ‘Strategies’ refers to a coordinated set of activities that are intended to affect a common outcome.
- ‘Services and products’ include all technical assistance actions and materials that Centers use to help their clients build capacity. Services may refer to ongoing discussions with clients, facilitation of meetings, organizing of conferences, training, discussions related to how to use or make meaning of relevant products, and other similar activities. Products are not only published materials for distribution, but may include meeting agendas/minutes, tool kits, professional development modules, websites, how-to guides, etc.
- ‘Milestones’ refer to implementation measures.
- ‘Indicators’ and ‘targets’ refer to outcome measures (indicators are the actual measures, targets refer to the amount or quantity of the indicators that the organization is aiming to achieve).
- ‘Quality,’ at a minimum, refers to (1) the research base (i.e. the rigor of and connection to the research base that a service or product is based upon), and (2) the extent to which the service or product met standards of delivery and presentation (e.g. meetings were well managed, products were written clearly and succinctly).
- ‘Relevance’ is the degree to which the material presented (and the way in which it is presented) is in alignment with the intended clients’ skills, prior knowledge, and needs.
- ‘Utility’ refers to the extent that the service or product is of actionable use to the client.
- ‘Technical Assistance’ covers all of the work of the Comprehensive Centers designed to help their clients build capacity through activities such as strategic planning, developing tailored tools, helping SEAs develop policies and



procedures, preparing state staff facilitators, pulling together available research on areas of interest, etc.

The contractor shall address the following research questions:

1. What were the specific components of the Comprehensive Centers' theories of action?
  - a. What goals were identified in each of the Comprehensive Centers? What processes were used to identify the goals and who was involved in the process?
  - b. What objectives and strategies did each Comprehensive Center develop to respond to these goals? What processes were used to establish the objectives and strategies?
  - c. What technical assistance activities (i.e. services and products) were planned in order to implement each strategy?
  - d. What were the intended outcomes of the planned work?
2. What milestones and targets did Comprehensive Centers use to monitor progress?
  - a. What implementation milestones were established to track progress towards completing the services and products with a high level of quality, relevance, and utility for the stakeholders?
  - b. What indicators and targets were established to track progress toward the intended outcomes?
3. What technical assistance services and products did the Centers provide?
  - a. To what extent and how did the Centers meet their implementation milestones?
  - b. To what extent and how did the Centers meet their indicators and targets as they moved towards the intended outcomes?
  - c. What were the quality, relevance, and utility of the Centers' services and products?
4. What were the lessons learned from the Comprehensive Centers' technical assistance efforts?
  - a. Which types of technical assistance (i.e. which services and products) were perceived by Center clients and Center staff as the most valuable in supporting Centers' objectives and building state capacity? What types of technical assistance were perceived as having little or no value in supporting the state goals or building state capacity? What types of technical assistance from Centers did clients identify as more or less effective than technical assistance from other sources? What were the perceived reasons for these differences?
  - b. What were the implementation challenges? What strategies were perceived by Center staff (and Center clients, if appropriate) as effective in meeting the challenges?
  - c. In what specific areas were the services and products used to deliver technical assistance identified as satisfactory or in need of improvement? What strategies did Comprehensive Centers use to address the areas in need of

improvement? In what ways did Comprehensive Centers demonstrate improvement over time?

- d. In what ways did “successful” implementation of the plans (i.e. implementation milestones were met) align with success or failure in meeting the desired outcomes? In cases in which “successful” implementation failed to make a difference in the desired outcomes, what were the perceived reasons for this failure?

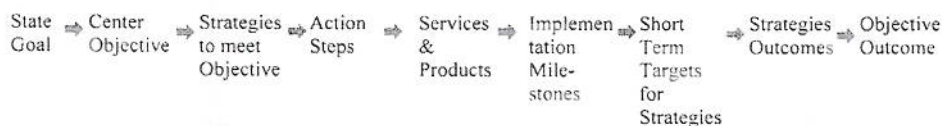
### C. Evaluation Approach

To support the formative and summative evaluations, the contractor shall create, promote, and implement a data collection system that is uniform across centers and collects data from planning stages through intended outcomes. One approach that incorporates this goal is the results-based monitoring and evaluation (RBM) framework used by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)<sup>7</sup> and World Bank.<sup>8</sup> The World Bank’s Handbook, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System*, describes RBM in the following way:

“Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation is a powerful management tool that can be used to help policymakers and decision makers track progress and demonstrate the impact of a given project, program, or policy. [RBM] differs from traditional implementation-focused Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in that it moves beyond an emphasis on inputs and outputs to a greater focus on outcomes and impacts” (p.1, Kusek & Rist, 2004).

Tracking implementation milestones will make it possible to address questions related to the Comprehensive Centers’ execution of their plans; tracking result-based indicators and outcomes will address questions related to the difference the technical assistance made on the desired outcomes. Figure 2 below provides a more detailed logic model that demonstrates how the Comprehensive Centers’ work fits into the RBM approach.

**Figure 2: Logic Model of Comprehensive Center Using RBM Approach:**



#### Using additional or alternative approaches to assess the work of the Centers

The RBM framework provides a common structure to evaluate all the Comprehensive Centers, and, importantly, focuses on intended *outcomes*. However, the contractor is

<sup>7</sup> Evaluation Office, *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating Results* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2002)

<sup>8</sup> Kusek, Jody Zall and Rist, Ray G. *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004)

permitted to select additional or alternative approaches to inform the design of this evaluation. For example, the Department recognizes that continuous improvement research<sup>9</sup> may be a viable approach to providing useful feedback to the Centers. This approach and others are not inconsistent with the RBM approach.

*An Example of RBM framework as it applies to Comprehensive Centers:* To provide an example of how the RBM framework (or an alternative framework that is based on a clear logic model) might be adapted to the Comprehensive Centers' work, assume that an SEA has the goal of recruiting, preparing, and retaining great teachers. In consultation with the SEA, the RC establishes an overall objective that is closely aligned to the state's goal, 'Enhance state capacity to prepare quality teachers,' and develops several strategies (groups of closely related activities) to support that objective. One strategy that is planned to support the objective is to assist the SEA in designing a process to evaluate the existing educator preparation programs in order to inform efforts to improve these programs. Several action steps are planned that lead to the completion of specific services and products to inform the design of the evaluation and then to, eventually, implement the evaluation.

Implementation milestones are set to assess whether the services and products are provided in a timely manner (for instance, "five focus groups will be conducted before May 1") and whether these services and products are rated by clients to be of high quality, relevance, and utility. Then, to determine if implementation is effective, the Center establishes targets and outcomes of specific indicators to assess whether the strategy has the intended effect by tracking the movement towards change in these educator preparation programs. The Center first takes note of what discussions and change of policies have occurred in these programs (short term targets). Then the Center observes how many educator preparation programs actually redesign some aspects of their program that are related to information gathered from the evaluation.

The aim for the Center is to affect the strategy outcome (redesign of educator programs). However, the overall objective (supported by many strategies that are implemented by the SEA, Center and other organizations) is to increase the percentage of teachers leaving these programs who are competent in the area of teaching (which theoretically translates to better student outcomes and teacher retention). With the Center's support, the SEA identifies an indicator that will serve as a proxy for measuring progress towards this objective. In this example, the SEA chooses the score on an exit exam as the indicator to measure progress towards increasing competence in teachers graduating from these programs. The SEA chooses the following five year target: If the collective strategies have been successful, then data will show that the number of new graduates of the educator preparation programs who score 80% or higher has increased by 15% from the baseline year. Table 3 below illustrates each step.

<sup>9</sup> See [http://ies.ed.gov/funding/comment\\_CIRE.asp](http://ies.ed.gov/funding/comment_CIRE.asp) for a discussion of continuous improvement and bibliography of resources.



Table 3: Example logic model for a Regional Comprehensive Center:

<u>Step</u>	<u>Prompt</u>	<u>Example</u>
State Goal:	What is the goal the SEA wishes to address with technical assistance from the RC?	Recruit, prepare, and retain great teachers
Center Objective:	What is the RC's objective in relationship to the SEA goals?	Enhance SEA capacity to adequately prepare quality teachers
Strategy:	What is one of several strategies that the RC will implement to meet the objective?	Assist the SEA in designing and implementing a process to evaluate educator preparation programs
Action steps:	What action steps are required in order to implement the strategy? Who will be responsible? What is the timeline?	Research other state educator evaluation systems; organize and facilitate focus groups; develop survey, conduct pilot survey, revise survey, select sample, implement survey, prepare recommendations to SEA based on survey results.
Services & Products	What services and/or products will be produced as a by-product of implementing the action steps?	(1) Facilitation of focus groups; (2) Survey instrument (3) Revised Survey based on pilot; Sampling Plan (4) Full implementation of survey (5) Briefing to SEA on recommendations.
Implementation Milestones:	Are the action steps implemented according to the timeline? Are related services and products of high quality, relevant, and useful to the SEA?	Focus groups are conducted. Survey instruments are completed on time and are valid & reliable as determined by an outside expert. Over 90% response rate to survey. Briefing to state is (1) high quality and based on careful review of evidence; (2) presented clearly to state leaders and supported with accessible documentation, and (3) in time to inform state decision.
Strategy Short Term Targets:	What indicators will be used to determine if intended changes are occurring? Do the indicators suggest that the strategy is working as intended?	End of year 2: Evidence that state used recommendations to inform policy; Yr 3: New policy adopted by State ; Yr 4: Three educator programs have redesigned their programs.
Strategy Outcomes:	What is the final expected observable outcome for this particular strategy?	At end of 5 years, 7 evaluator educator preparation programs have redesigned their programs; New survey indicates that many issues raised in earlier survey have been addressed.
Objective Outcomes:	What observable outcome is expected as a result of implementation of RC strategies <i>and other efforts by SEA and supporting organizations</i> ?	At the end of 5 years, the percentage of teachers scoring 80% or higher on teacher prep exit exam has increased by 15% since baseline (yr 0). (Targets track annual progress of this percent).

*Uniformity of Indicators across Centers:* One of the first tasks for the contractor will be to develop a system for data collection that supports uniformity of data across Centers, but allows the individual Centers the flexibility to tailor the system to meet their specific needs. This system will include the development of a data collection or tracking template for Centers to use in their planning. The contractor will be expected to assist the Centers in learning to use the template and, importantly, encourage and support Centers to use the same indicators and measures for similar objectives across Centers.

Data collected through the template shall be used for formative and summative reports.

#### Formative Evaluation

The goal of the formative evaluation is to provide ongoing feedback to Comprehensive Centers and the Department in order for the Centers to adjust plans, improve their ability to enhance state capacity, and meet intended outcomes throughout the grant period. The contractor shall consider what information--in what form and at what frequency--is needed in order to meet this goal.

The contractor shall determine and propose the type, format, and frequency of reports that will best meet the goal of supporting Centers to continuously improve services. Reports shall be frequent enough to enable the Centers to use them to respond, adapt, and improve plans throughout the grant period. For all reports, the purpose shall be clearly stated, the results shall be displayed in a simple, straightforward style, and the entire document shall be written in a clear and concise manner. Examples of types of formative reports that the contractor may develop include (but are not limited to) the following products:

For individual Comprehensive Centers (Non-published reports intended to be distributed only to the Department and shared with the individual center):

- Detailed feedback on strengths and areas of needed improvement on a particular service or product in order for the Center to improve the quality, relevance, and/or utility of future work;
- Summaries of client satisfaction surveys and analyses of changes over time; or
- Comparisons of individual Center's service and product ratings with aggregate ratings across all Centers.

For all Comprehensive Centers and the Department:

- Descriptive memos that highlight similarities and differences of objectives, strategies, and indicators used across Centers;
- Summaries of common areas of strength and needed improvement across Centers;
- Summaries and descriptions of types of technical assistance that have been perceived as particularly useful to SEAs as recorded in customer satisfaction surveys or surveys of SEA staff;

- Summary data on implementation milestones and/or outcome targets met across Centers

For the Department:

- Comparisons of Centers' technical assistance quality and designs
- Simple analyses of data to respond to specific requests from the Department
- Early indicators of potential areas of concern

The contractor shall consider the following criteria to guide decisions related to the average expected number, type, and function of these reports:

1. Reports should have explicit, clear, and compelling added value to a Center or set of Centers (i.e. The report should be more than just 'interesting.' It should provide information that a Center could consider in order to improve its services).
2. Reports should not supplant the essential monitoring activities that each Center is expected to implement as a normal course of its work.
3. Reports should be distributed to Centers in a timely manner. Data collection and analyses required to develop the report must be straightforward and clear.

### Summative Evaluation

The goal of the summative evaluation is to provide analyses of Comprehensive Centers' efforts to build state capacity at the SEA level. The evaluation will describe the relationships among the objectives, strategies, and outcomes of the Comprehensive Centers, report on the quality, relevance and utility of their services and products, and share lessons related to building capacity at the SEA level. By reporting on the quality, relevance, and utility of the Centers, the report will inform the Department's measurement of the performance of the Centers. The proposed performance measures include (1) the percentage of all Comprehensive Centers' services and products that are deemed to be of high quality by qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise to review substantive content of the services and products; (2) the percentage of all Comprehensive Centers' services and products that are deemed to be of high relevance to educational policy or practice by target audiences; and (3) the percentage of all Comprehensive Centers' services and products that are deemed to be of high usefulness to educational policy or practice by target audiences.

The contractor shall use the 2011 report of the evaluation of the previous group of Comprehensive Centers as a starting point to inform design decisions for this evaluation (see <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=NCEE20114031> ). However, rather than replicate the earlier evaluation, the contractor should design strategies to explore issues in greater detail. For instance, the previous final report states "Ongoing consultation was the type of project activity cited by the largest numbers of RCs and CCs as (1) most requested by clients, (2) the largest investment, and (3) the most important for achieving Center goals" (Turnbull, 2011, p 42).



The proposed study design should be explicit about which findings of the earlier study will be explored in greater detail, and provide a compelling explanation for why this exploration will be of actionable value to the Centers or other technical assistance providers.

To inform issues or questions that arise as the study progresses, the contractor shall consult with the Department to determine if conducting further study is needed to allow for more in-depth investigation on a particular topic or issue. Further study would be appropriate, for example, in the following circumstances: (1) when comparing progress towards similar objectives across Centers illuminates an unexpected result that warrants more detailed description to interpret the findings; (2) when the contractor believes the context and/or a more detailed description is required to make the reported results understandable to the intended audience; (3) when detailed description is required to answer an emerging question related to the delivery of technical assistance services to build State capacity.

The summative evaluation will result in an interim and final report. Most, if not all, of the data that will be collected to inform the formative evaluation will be used for the summative evaluation.

#### **D. Data Sources:**

The following data sources shall be used for the formative and summative evaluation:

- **Comprehensive Center Documents.** The contractor shall examine materials describing the goals and activities of each Center, including each Center's grant application to the Department, the annual plan for technical assistance to each state (in the case of RCs only) and its management plan approved by the Department. After this initial review, the contractor shall develop a common tracking template in consultation with the Centers and the Department to enable uniform reporting of objectives, strategies, milestones, and targets throughout the rest of the contract. The template shall be designed to provide uniformity across Centers but also flexible enough to be adaptable to individual Center needs.
- **Tracking Template:** Centers will be responsible for routinely updating and submitting data using the tracking template to the contractor on a quarterly basis. The data submitted by Centers using the templates will be a major source of information for this study.
- **Customer Satisfaction Surveys for Center Services and Products:** The contractor shall develop brief standardized surveys for each type of common service and product that the Centers provide. At a minimum, the surveys shall request that Center clients rate and provide feedback on the quality, relevance, and usefulness of the services or products received. These surveys shall be uniform enough so that ratings can be compared across Centers and across activities, but flexible enough to allow for individual Center modifications (e.g.

additional questions, re-ordering, etc.). The Centers will distribute and collect the surveys, but the contractor will be responsible for conducting the analyses for the Centers. The surveys shall be available in paper and electronic form.

- **Peer Review:** The contractor shall develop a system of peer review in which reviewers are selected based on relevant research, content, and/or practitioner expertise. The reviewers will rate and provide feedback on the quality, relevance, and utility of a sample of each Center's services or products. The peer review system shall be ongoing and efficient so as to be responsive in a timely way to service implementation or product completion. As the customer satisfaction surveys will be designed to provide ratings on the majority of services and products of the Centers, the emphasis for the peer reviews shall be on providing a thorough review of a sample of services and/or products so that Centers may improve on similar services and products in the future. Reviews of Center services shall be based on on-site observation rather than based solely on a review of artifacts related to the service. The reviews will be shared with the relevant Centers, as well as summarized across Centers by activity type and content areas in order to share lessons learned and provide feedback to the Department on areas of strength and areas in need of improvement.
- **Surveys to SEA staff:** The contractor shall survey the educational agency leaders from each of the states and territories twice during the 54 month contract. The survey shall focus on specific goals and objectives of regional and state education systems, the ways in which SEAs use and perceive the Comprehensive Centers' work in comparison to other technical assistance providers, the extent to which Comprehensive Centers (RCs and CCs) have helped SEAs meet their objectives and have expanded State capacity to support their districts and schools, and areas in which the Comprehensive Centers can improve in order to better serve state needs..
- **Surveys to Comprehensive Center staff:** The contractor shall survey Center staff on an annual basis to assess staff perceptions on successes and challenges on building SEA capacity as well as examine the extent to which CCs have expanded RCs capacity to serve their SEAs
- **Interviews with SEA and Comprehensive Center Staff:** The contractor shall conduct semi-structured interviews with key staff at each SEA and Comprehensive Center twice during the 54 month period of performance. The main purpose of the interviews is to augment the surveys by providing greater detail on issues related to strengthening state capacity.

#### E. Design Issues

Discussed below are several factors that will affect the evaluation design. Other design issues may arise as the evaluation is carried out. At a minimum, the contractor shall effectively address the design issues listed below.

- **Balance Between Uniformity and Flexibility:** For all design issues, the contractor shall strive to maintain an appropriate balance between promoting uniformity of data collection across Centers and allowing flexibility for individual Centers to perform their work with as little interruption and burden on their current systems as possible. The contractor shall also consider the balance between uniformity and flexibility when developing the design, content, and format of the formative reports. The reports shall be uniform enough to increase efficiency and timeliness during development but also adaptable enough to address the specific issues related to individual centers.
- **Appropriate Adaptation of Study Design to the Different Missions of RCs and CCs:** For all tasks, the contractor shall consider which evaluation processes will be the same for RCs and CCs and when adaptations will be required due to the different missions and clients of these two types of Comprehensive Centers. Project sampling, survey designs, interview protocols, and other design decisions shall reflect the differences between these two types of Centers where necessary.
- **Identifying Unit of Analyses and Appropriate Sample of Services and Products:** As described earlier, to provide technical assistance to SEAs (and in the case of CCs, technical assistance to SEAs and RCs), the Centers develop strategies that include various activities and materials to support a common objective. The contractor shall identify a method to sample discrete components of the Centers' work to evaluate, while ensuring that the context of the full scope of the strategy is not lost in the process.
- **Cooperation in Data Collection:** Successful completion of the evaluation will require the contractor to obtain cooperation from the Comprehensive Centers in meeting with contractor staff, developing and completing the tracking templates, preparing select services/products for review, distributing customer satisfaction surveys to clients, completing surveys, and participating in interviews.
- **Formation of Peer Review System:** The contractor shall identify and recruit qualified reviewers to rate Comprehensive Centers' technical assistance activities on an ongoing basis. As RCs are more likely to provide services rather than develop products, special attention shall be given to ensuring that the appropriate reviewers are recruited, and the methods and rubrics are designed for these services.
- **Statistical Analysis:** The contractor shall use the most appropriate statistical techniques to analyze the data gathered throughout the evaluation to effectively address issues of validity and reliability of the service and product ratings.
- **Interrelated Data Collection Instruments:** The data collection instruments developed for this study shall include comparable questions in order to compare and contrast information gathered from different sources. If major differences are observed between these sources, further study may be warranted to understand issues related to the observed disparities.



## F. Scope of Work

This section specifies the tasks and subtasks that the contractor shall perform. All deliverables shall be submitted to the Department's Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) electronically. Unless otherwise indicated, the COR will notify the contractor within three weeks of receipt of any changes required in the deliverable, and the contractor shall have up to three weeks to make the necessary revisions and submit a final deliverable to the Department. The COR reserves the right to inspect the contractor's work while in process. The contractor shall submit to the COR any progress report or other written documentation of work to date that the COR requests to facilitate that inspection, in accordance with contract clause 52.246-4 (fixed price) and 52.246-5 (cost-reimbursement). The contractor shall perform the following tasks:

Tasks	Title
1	Meet with the Department
2	Identify and convene Technical Working Group (TWG)
3	Meet with Comprehensive Centers
4	Develop, implement, and refine a common tracking template
5	Build capacity within Centers to use the RBM or alternative framework
6	Develop and analyze customer satisfaction surveys
7	Create and manage peer review system
8	Develop, distribute, and analyze surveys for SEA and Comprehensive Center staff
9	Conduct interviews with SEA and Comprehensive Center staff
10	Prepare and submit documents for IRB/OMB approval of data collection activities
11	Prepare and disseminate formative reports
12	Prepare summative reports
13	Submit progress reports to the Department
14	Optional Task: Propose, prepare, implement, and report on further investigative study requiring additional data collection

Task 1: **Meet with the Department (Firm Fixed Price)**

- 1.1 **Startup Meeting.** The contractor's project director and up to two other key project staff members shall meet with the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and other appropriate Department staff in Washington, DC, within one week following the award date to discuss the tasks outlined in the proposal, study design, scheduling activities, and other issues related to the contract. The contractor shall come prepared to identify any areas of concern and to suggest ways of responding to these concerns.

Within two weeks following the meeting, the contractor shall prepare a memo summarizing the key issues and concerns raised at the meeting, and how each concern will be addressed in the study.

- 1.2 **Monthly Conference Calls.** The contract's project director shall participate in monthly conference calls with the COR to discuss the progress of the evaluation. These conference calls shall occur within one week following the delivery of the monthly progress report prepared under Task 13, below. A one-page summary of the meeting, including any major decisions, challenges, and action steps, shall be submitted to the COR for review within 2 business days of the meeting. Final summary is due within 2 business days of COR review.

**Deliverables:**

- Memo of key issues and concerns raised at startup meeting.
- One page summaries after each monthly conference call

Task 2: **Identify and Convene a Technical Working Group (Firm Fixed Price)**

- 2.1 **Proposed List of Experts for Technical Working Group.** At the opening meeting of the evaluation to be held within one week following the award date, the contractor shall propose experts to belong to a Technical Work Group (TWG) for the evaluation. The role of the TWG shall be to advise the contractor on the conduct of the study including, but not limited to, the following: using the results-based M&E framework to support formative reports, evaluation design, instrumentation, data collection, case studies, data analysis, and draft evaluation reports. The TWG shall be comprised of five (5) individuals who have the expertise necessary to address the relevant issues listed above in the context of evaluating technical assistance to SEAs. At least one TWG member shall have direct experience working for an SEA. TWG members must not have conflicts of interest with any of the Centers.
- 2.2 **Final List of Experts for TWG.** By week four, the contractor shall submit a final list of experts for the TWG. This list shall reflect input from the COR regarding the sorts of expertise needed to provide guidance for the evaluation.

- 2.3 Letters of Commitment and Consulting rates. After the proposed TWG members are approved by the COR, the contractor shall contact each proposed member and submit letters of commitment as well as documentation of consulting rates to the COR and CO by the sixth week after the award date. Approval of the proposed TWG members by the CO shall be required before the first TWG meeting may occur.
- 2.4 TWG Meetings. By the end of Month 3 following the award date, the contractor shall convene a meeting of the first TWG to provide guidance to the contractor on the evaluation, with a focus on the formative evaluation. The second meeting shall be held near month 8 to focus primarily on design issues related to the summative evaluation. The TWG shall be convened twice more during the 54 month period of performance. Timing of these meetings shall be determined by the Department in consultation with the contractor to ensure TWG input on the most pressing design and analysis issues.

For each TWG meeting, the proposed agenda and written background materials for the meeting shall be shared with the COR two weeks in advance to permit comment prior to distribution to TWG members. After the meeting, the contractor shall submit a written summary of each TWG meeting to the COR within two weeks, detailing suggestions and recommendations along with the contractor's proposed actions.

The meeting site shall be arranged to minimize travel of Federal government staff members. When meetings are held in the DC area, the contractor shall work with the Department to reserve a location at a Department facility. Any other location in DC shall require approval from the Office of the Secretary (OS). The contractor shall handle meeting logistics and shall cover the travel, per diem, and honorarium expenses of the TWG members. The meetings shall include a working lunch for which the contractor shall provide meals. The cost of the working lunch shall be deducted from each TWG member's per diem. Working lunch will be provided for only those who are on travel status. The contractor shall not provide meals for the Department employees and contractor staff who are not on travel status.

The contractor shall use TWG members to review contractor products (analysis plans, draft reports, etc.), as appropriate, when group meetings are not required. Each member of the TWG shall be available for an average of 24 additional hours for ongoing consultation with the contractor and relevant Department staff. The contractor shall provide copies of all reviews of products by TWG members to the COR within five business days of receipt by the contractor. If a TWG member recommends any significant deviation from the proposal, study design, instrumentation, data collection, or data analysis, the contractor shall submit the recommendation to the COR for approval prior to implementation.



Deliverables:

- Proposed list of experts, with CVs and rationale.
- Final list of experts.
- Letters of commitment and consulting rates.
- Agenda and background materials for TWG meetings.
- Summaries of TWG meetings.
- TWG reviews of contractor products

Task 3: Meet with Comprehensive Centers (Firm Fixed Price)

- 3.1 Schedule of Meetings: By week three of each contract year (except year 5), the contractor shall prepare and submit a schedule that provides details of proposed meetings with Comprehensive Centers for that year. The schedule shall include the following information: purpose of meeting, venue, and intended participants. Purposes of meetings may include the following: introduction to the RBM or alternative framework, feedback on development of forms, surveys, or interview protocols, articulation of indicators and measures for tracking progress, feedback on formative reports, identification of clients for surveys or panel reviews, etc. Whenever possible, the contractor shall rely on webinar or another networking technology to reduce costs and increase accessibility to participants. Highlights of issues raised at the meetings shall be included in the monthly reports.
- 3.2 Site Visits: The contractor shall schedule one site visit to each Comprehensive Center during the first year to provide support for Centers in carrying out responsibilities of the evaluation (e.g. support on organizing and completing forms, identifying appropriate clients for interviews, setting up electronic surveys for events, gathering information that would be useful to improve evaluation design, etc). The contractor shall determine the number of additional site visits required to successfully carry out the requirements of the evaluation. The follow up site visit(s) may be used to provide additional evaluation support to the Center, to conduct interviews (task 9) and/or to conduct additional data collection activities (if the Department exercises Optional Task 14). The contractor shall submit a draft agenda for COR review for each site visit 2 weeks before travel. Highlights of and issues raised during the site visits shall be included in the monthly reports.

Deliverables:

- Schedule of planned meetings and site visits (annually with the exception of year 5)
- Agendas for site visits (2 weeks before travel)

Task 4: Develop, Implement, and Refine a Common Tracking Template (Cost Reimbursement)

4.1 Development of a Tracking Template: The contractor shall initially review existing Comprehensive Center documents, including each Center's final proposal, and other relevant Department materials to develop a template that facilitates the planning and documentation of the Centers' work as it relates to implementation and result-based outcomes. The template shall be designed with the goal of replacing or supplementing, rather than duplicating, each Centers' current documentation used for internal planning and monitoring (i.e. the Centers should not have to complete one form for their own planning and monitoring processes, and another form for this evaluation). The template shall be flexible enough for the individual Centers to add to or reorganize the data to meet their individual needs and preferences. For the purposes of the evaluation, however, the following information must be linked on the template to enable the contractor to follow the logic model for each Center objective:

- State goal,
- Center objective,
- Strategies planned to meet the objective,
- Actions steps (optional—the contractor, in consultation with the Centers and the Department, shall determine whether this level of granularity is needed for the evaluation)
- Services and products,
- Implementation milestones,
- Outcome indicators with targets,
- Intended outcomes.

The completed templates from each Center will be the major data source for this study.

The contractor shall use either a software program that is easily accessible and easy to use for all Centers (for example, Excel, Access, or similar programs) or provide justification for using a different program..<sup>10</sup>

In consultation with the Centers, the contractor shall draft a template and shall submit the draft to the Department for review by week seven of the contract. After the Department reviews and provides feedback on the draft, the contractor shall give all Centers two weeks to formally review and comment on the final draft of the template before the contractor revises and returns the revised draft to the Department for final approval. Center feedback shall be submitted to the Department by the contractor at the same time that the contractor submits the

<sup>10</sup> Please note: Although there has been a recent push to use cloud based and "free" tools (such as Google Docs and Gmail, Dropbox and others), for security reasons, it is unlikely that the Department employees will be able to gain access to these tools. Any tools that require special approval from the Department for Department employees to use will not be acceptable.

revised template draft to the Department. The templates shall be finalized by the end of month four in order for Centers to make their first submission of completed templates to the contractor by end of month six. At the time that the finalized template is sent to the Centers, the contractor shall inform the Centers that they will be given another opportunity to provide formal feedback once all Centers have started using the templates (Task 4.3).

- 4.2 Collection of Data from Tracking Templates: The contractor shall collect the data that is recorded on the template from each Center on a quarterly basis (or more often if the software program allows for this to be done more often without extra burden to the Centers). The contractor shall provide assistance to the Centers, when needed, to complete the forms in the way that the evaluation requires.
- 4.3 Refinement of the Tracking Template: Two months after the template is fully implemented (i.e. all Centers have submitted the first round of data using the template), the contractor shall request feedback from the Centers on the utility and ease of use. Each Center shall be allowed 2 weeks to provide this feedback as well as suggestions for improvement. The contractor shall use this feedback to assess in what ways the system can be improved, causing the least amount of burden on Centers as possible. The contractor shall submit a letter of intent to ED, along with Center feedback, that summarizes the cost/benefits of a refinement plan. Upon approval, the contractor shall make the agreed upon refinements.

Deliverables:

- First draft of template
- Final draft of template with Center comments
- Memo of intent for refining template with Center comments
- Refined template (if needed)

Task 5: Build Capacity within Centers to use the RBM or Alternative Framework (Firm Fixed Price)

- 5.1 Support for Centers to use RBM or Alternative Framework: Although some Comprehensive Centers may be experienced in the RBM or alternative framework, the contractor shall assume that many Centers will need technical support, especially near the beginning of the contract. The contractor shall offer webinars or phone conferences to train and facilitate discussions on how to adapt the selected framework to their work. The contractor shall request feedback from the Centers on topics that need to be addressed. Within four weeks of the contract, the contractor shall have implemented the first webinar related to evaluation framework. The sessions shall be recorded and the recordings made easily accessible so that Center personnel that were unable to be present for the webinar or call can benefit from the meeting. The contractor shall determine the number, frequency, and topics of these webinars for each year, with approval from COR. The contractor shall submit a proposed plan and agenda for each webinar to the Department no later than 2 weeks before each scheduled webinar. A brief



summary of each webinar shall be provided in the monthly progress report that includes major issues discussed, next steps, and a brief self-evaluation of how the webinar might be improved upon.

- 5.2 Aligning Outcome Indicators: When possible, Centers shall be encouraged to use the same indicators and measures for similar objectives across Centers. To encourage this alignment, the contractor shall facilitate communication among Centers and assist in identifying appropriate indicators and targets to measure progress over time. The first step is to prepare a memo that summarizes any outcomes that were identified in the Center proposals and provide this list to the Centers by week 12. A draft of this memo is due to the Department in week nine. Aligning outcome indicators and targets shall be the focus of at least one of the webinars under Task 5.1.
- 5.3 Support for Acquiring Data of Indicators: When requested by Centers, the contractor shall assist the individual Center in identifying and accessing appropriate data sources. By the end of month six, and then annually through year 3, the contractor shall prepare a memo for the Centers and the Department that summarizes all indicators being used by Centers and their associated data sources. Drafts of these memos shall be submitted to the Department three weeks before distribution to Centers. The purpose of this memo is to provide a resource for Centers as they develop new objectives throughout the grant period.

Deliverables:

- Plan and agendas for each webinar
- Memo of proposed outcomes—draft and final
- Memo that summarizes outcome indicators, targets, and data sources across Centers.

Task 6: Develop and Analyze Customer Satisfaction Surveys (Cost Reimbursement)

- 6.1 Development of Customer Satisfaction Surveys: The contractor shall develop brief customer satisfaction surveys for Centers to distribute directly after a service has been delivered or product has been disseminated.. Surveys shall be developed for key activities that are common among many of the Centers, as noted in the tracking template submissions. The Department recognizes that some of these services will be difficult to identify as discrete instances in which to survey customers. In these cases, the contractor may request extra time from the Department to experiment with different approaches or sampling decisions in order to develop the most feasible and useful survey possible.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For example, one option that the contractor might use to measure quality, relevance, and utility of “ongoing consultation and follow up,” is to ask the Center to distribute a short survey to the customer after every third meeting of an individual consultation on a particular issue.

The surveys shall be uniform enough to compare responses across activities and Centers, but flexible enough that they are relevant to the activity that is being surveyed. The surveys must also be adaptable to individual Center preferences so that additional questions of interest to the Center may be added. The surveys shall be designed to limit burden to customers and shall acknowledge the context of the particular service or product (e.g. in what ways the service or product is connected to a larger strategy). In consultation with the Department and the Centers, the contractor shall submit draft and piloted surveys to the Department by end of month five. Surveys shall be available in paper and electronic form. Final surveys shall be completed and ready for OMB review by the end of month seven (Task 10).

- 6.2 Responsive Feedback to Centers: The Centers shall be responsible for distributing and collecting these surveys. Once collected, Centers shall send the completed paper surveys or data from the electronic surveys to the contractor who shall (1) provide summary analyses of the data back to the Center and the Department within 2 weeks of receiving the data, and (2) use the data to inform the formative and summative evaluations. The contractor shall provide the Comprehensive Center with strategies (and support, when needed) for ensuring a valid response rate to the surveys.

The contractor shall determine (with COR approval) the number and frequency of surveys that are required to provide sufficient information to the Centers and to inform the summative evaluation.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final customer satisfaction survey instruments
- Simple analyses of each survey

Task 7: Create and Manage Peer Review System (Cost Reimbursement)

- 7.1 System of Review: The contractor shall develop an ongoing system of peer review to provide Centers with in-depth feedback on the quality, relevance, and utility of their services and products. The contractor shall propose the appropriate number and type of reviewers that are needed for each type of service or product in order to ensure that the activities are rated in a valid and reliable manner.<sup>12</sup>

Peer review of services and products shall begin at year 2 and continue until the end of the contract period. Appropriate reviewers shall be assigned at least 3 weeks before the activity or event date (i.e. service) to be observed. Products shall be submitted and assigned to appropriate reviewers within 1 week of Center completion. Reviewers shall have up to 3 weeks to determine ratings and provide feedback on any given service or product. The contractor shall then organize the

<sup>12</sup> The last evaluation was required to use "review panels" to satisfy ED performance measures. However, language of the new performance measures has changed, allowing for more flexibility in this data collection method.

feedback in a memo to the Center (via the Department). Whenever possible, Centers should receive feedback no later than 6 weeks after the completed service or product. The contractor shall submit the memos to the Department before sending memos to the Centers.

After receiving the reviews from the peer reviewers, the contractor shall develop a system to summarize themes addressed in the review. This summary information shall be used for the formative and summative evaluations.

Selecting Sample of Services or Products for Review: Beginning in the second year of the contract, the contractor shall develop a system that allows a service or product to be reviewed at a frequency determined by the contractor and approved by the COR. The contractor shall propose a purposeful sampling process for selecting the services or products for review. Two separate sampling plans shall be developed for the RCs and CCs since the work differs substantially between these two types of Centers. The purposeful samples for each plan shall be designed to complement the data gathered from the customer satisfaction surveys. Purposeful samples shall be proposed that (1) provide the greatest likelihood for Centers to improve their services and products, (2) determine if services and products have improved in quality over time and (3) cause relatively little burden for the Centers.<sup>13</sup>

As discussed in the earlier design section of this PWS, the contractor shall be required to identify a method to sample discrete components of the Centers' work to evaluate, while ensuring that the context of the full scope of the strategy is not lost in the process

At the end of month seven, the contractor shall propose a sampling plan and provide a recommendation to the Department for approval. Six weeks before the start of each contract year (with the exception of year 5), the contractor shall submit recommendations (with rationale) for sampling activities for the upcoming year.

- 7.2 Identifying and Recruiting Reviewers: The contractor shall identify and recruit reviewers to rate a sample of services and products on the basis of their quality, relevance, and usefulness to the specified intended outcome. Peer reviewers shall be screened to avoid conflicts of interest (e.g. a contractual relationship with the Center in question or a beneficiary of that Center's activities), and may include state education officials, local education agency officials, school principals, teachers, researchers, content specialists, and other education experts. The contractor shall identify and recruit a sufficient number of qualified reviewers to ensure that specific services and products of each Center are rated within the time frame outlined in subtask 7.1 above. When possible, the contractor shall recruit

<sup>13</sup> When determining the appropriate sampling strategy, the contractor shall keep in mind that reviews of services shall be based on *on-site observation* rather than based solely on a review of artifacts.



reviewers who work in the same geographical location as the Centers in order to reduce travel costs associated with peer reviewers rating Centers' services.

By the end of month eight, the contractor shall send the Department a draft list of the reviewers and alternates proposed to rate the services and products of the Centers. This list shall be accompanied by short descriptions of the qualifications of each proposed reviewer (one page maximum for each). The Department will offer comments on the proposed list within two weeks. Following the receipt of the Department's comments on the proposed reviewers, the contractor shall prepare a final list of reviewers and alternates, and send this list to the COR no later than the end of month nine following the award date.

After the proposed peer reviewers are approved by the COR, the contractor shall contact each proposed member to confirm participation and submit letters of commitment as well as documentation of consulting rates to the COR and CO by end of month ten after the award date. Approval of the proposed reviewers by the CO shall be required before reviewers may begin to rate the services and products.

- 7.3 Developing review forms and rubrics: To ensure that the responses to the services or products are accomplished in a timely manner and are valid and reliable, the contractor shall develop forms and rubrics that guide reviewers through the review process. The form shall include information about the context of the sampled service or product (as discussed in subtask 7.2) and should include prompts or questions to solicit guidance about how the service or product could be improved. Rubrics shall be explicit and provide examples of services or products that would warrant each rating possible on the three dimensions.

Each dimension--quality, relevance, and utility--shall be specifically defined by the contractor – while attending to the definitions provided in this PWS – and the contractor shall address the ways in which these terms may apply differently to different services and products. In developing the rubric, the contractor shall consider the questions and definitions used for the customer satisfaction surveys so that the two different data sources can be compared (subtask 7.5).

Draft forms and rubrics shall be submitted to the Department by end of month 8 of the contract. After Department review of the draft, the contractor shall share the forms and rubrics with the Centers. Centers shall have 2 weeks to review and provide recommended improvements. The revised draft shall be submitted by end of month 10. Final forms and rubrics shall be sent to each of the Centers so that Centers will have the opportunity to initiate an internal review process, if they so choose.

- 7.4 Crosswalk between Panel Reviews and Customer Satisfaction Surveys: When developing the panel review rubrics and the customer satisfaction surveys, the contractor shall pilot both instruments to ensure that there is enough uniformity between the two instruments to allow for comparability. At month 18, and then

annually from that date (months 30 and 42), the contractor shall submit a memo to the Department that compares and contrasts the results from the panel reviews and customer satisfaction surveys. The purpose of this analysis shall be to investigate the validity of the surveys (for instance, do customers rate quality similarly or differently than the peer reviewers?) and to explore whether observed differences between the customer surveys and peer reviews indicate an issue that warrants further exploration.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final proposed system of review including sampling plan with rationale (Task 7.1 and 7.2 combined)
- Reviewer feedback memos to Centers
- Summary sheet of themes found in reviews
- Annual updated proposed sampling plan (not applicable year 5)
- Draft and final list of reviewers with qualifications
- Letters of commitment and consulting rates
- Draft, revised draft with Center comments, and final draft of review forms and rubrics
- Crosswalk memos highlighting similarities and differences between results of customer satisfaction surveys and peer review

Task 8: **Develop, Distribute, and Analyze Surveys for SEA and Comprehensive Center Staff (Cost Reimbursement)**

Survey of SEA staff: The objective for the survey of the SEA staff is to determine SEAs' perceptions of the Comprehensive Centers' ability to strengthen state capacity to help districts and states. The survey shall be designed to get specific feedback on what types of activities were most helpful to the state (by any TA organization), what activities were seen to have very little value, and ways in which the Centers could be more helpful in building state capacity.

Before the contractor begins to develop this survey, however, the contractor shall consult with the Department to determine if the desired information can be found through a different source (for instance, another evaluation on technical assistance) in order to save costs and lessen the burden on potential survey recipients. Assuming the Department does not identify another source, drafts (after pilot testing) are due to the Department at month 14 (or earlier, if the contractor decides to consolidate OMB clearances – see NOTE at end of Task 10) and ready for OMB review at month 15. The survey shall be distributed twice— at approximately months 20 and 39.

The contractor's analyses for this survey shall be incorporated in the interim and final summative reports. In addition, three months after survey distribution, the contractor shall prepare a memo to the Department that provides a simple descriptive summary of the data. If the Department and the contractor determine

that the results of the survey would be useful to the Centers, then the contractor shall prepare a memo to the Centers as part of the formative evaluation. After review by the Department, contractor revision, and final Department approval, the contractor shall distribute the memo to the Centers.

- 8.1 Annual Surveys to Comprehensive Center staff: The contractor shall survey Center staff on an annual basis to assess staff perceptions of their successes and limitations for building state capacity (or in the case of CC, their ability to build RC capacity and state capacity). The survey shall provide an opportunity for the staff to offer their explanations or theories about why something has or has not worked, or the questions they have about their work. Responses to this survey shall be an important source for providing the Department and Center directors with information on what type of supports are needed for improving the Centers' capacity. The responses shall also help identify areas in which further inquiry is needed.

The contractor shall submit drafts of the survey instrument to the Department at the end of Month 4. The contractor shall (1) ensure that the survey is ready to submit to OMB by the end of Month 6, (2) distribute the survey to the Centers for distribution to the staff before the end of month 11, and (3) ensure that all surveys are completed by the end of month 12. The contractor shall administer the survey annually through the end of year 4 (month 47) or the last month of the grantee's period of performance – whichever is earlier.

The contractor shall draft a memo that provides simple descriptive summary information of the survey and submit to the Department within 3 months of survey distribution (approximately by end of Month 14 for first survey). After review by the Department, contractor revision, and final Department approval, the contractor shall distribute the memo to the Centers. As with the other data collection methods, this data shall be part of the formative and summative evaluations.

Deliverables:

- Draft and Final Survey Instrument for SEA staff
- Two Rounds of Surveys for SEA Staff
- Memo reporting descriptive data of SEA surveys
- Draft and Final Survey Instrument for Center staff
- Four Rounds of Surveys for Center staff
- Memo reporting descriptive data of Center staff surveys

Task 9: Conduct Interviews with SEA and Comprehensive Center staff (Cost Reimbursement)

- 9.1 Interviews: The contractor shall conduct semi-structured interviews with key staff at each SEA and Comprehensive Center twice during the period of performance. The main purpose of the interviews is to augment the surveys (Task 8) by providing greater detail related to strengthening state capacity. The protocols of the



interviews shall be developed after the data from the SEA survey is analyzed. Because the interviews will be following survey data, the interview protocol shall be focused on questions in which the answers from the survey (or other data collection efforts) were either unexpected, and/or difficult to interpret without further explanation. A draft interview protocol, with an attached memo justifying the reasons for the questions, shall be submitted to the Department at approximately month 22. The protocols should be ready for OMB approval by the following month (or earlier, if the contractor decides to consolidate OMB clearances – see NOTE at end of Task 10). Interviews shall be conducted upon OMB approval (allow for 6 months).

Two months following the completion of each round of interviews, the contractor shall prepare a memo to the Department that summarizes the main issues that surfaced from the interviews. If the Department and the contractor determine that some or all of the issues raised would be useful to the Centers, then the contractor shall prepare a memo to the Centers as part of the formative evaluation.

Deliverables:

- Interview Protocols with justification—Draft and final
- Conduct interviews
- Memo to the Department summarizing main issues raised by interviews
- Formative reports to Centers (if warranted)

Task 10: **Prepare and Submit Documents to Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Approval of Data Collection Activities (Firm Fixed Price)**

The contractor is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of data collection from Centers and Center clients are approved by the contractor's own Institutional Review Board (IRB). As necessary, the contractor shall coordinate its own IRB approval for the piloting, field testing, and implementation of data collection with the IRB approval obtained by Centers from their own institutions.

When preparing OMB clearance packages, the contractor shall ensure that the package justifies the necessity for collecting the data and comprehensively responds to each required item in the instructions. In addition, the contractor shall ensure that the forms clearance package includes: (1) the study mandate and objectives, (2) the research questions (3) a crosswalk between the research question and the information to be collected, (4) instructions to study participants, (5) consent forms for respondents, (6) description and justification for any measures to promote higher response rates, (7) discussion of question likely to be deemed "sensitive" by OMB, (8) limitation of the study and its potential use for policy decisions, and (9) table shells indicating how data will be tabulated and analyzed. If possible, the contractor shall also include the anticipated response rate on any survey measures.

The contractor shall submit the OMB forms mindful that clearance requires a minimum of 120 days (fewer days are required for fast track customer satisfaction surveys), and how this corresponds with the agreed schedule of deliverables. The contractor shall ensure high quality preparation of the forms so that only two revisions of the package are required during the approval process.

- 10.1 IRB Approval for Customer Satisfaction Surveys: The contractor shall obtain approval from its IRB (and from the individual Center IRBs, if necessary) for its customer satisfaction surveys related to the services and products of the Centers. Documentation of all IRB approval shall be submitted to the COR no later than month 6.
- 10.2 OMB Approval for Customer Satisfaction Surveys: The contractor shall prepare an OMB fast track forms-clearance package (and revised package, if necessary) that lists the Comprehensive Centers, describes the study design and data collection instruments, and includes the surveys required for OMB approval. The draft package is due to the Department by month 6, and final package should be ready for OMB by month seven (see task 6--draft survey instrument is due month 5).
- 10.3 IRB Approval of surveys and protocols: The contractor shall obtain approval from its IRB (and from the individual Center IRBs, if necessary) for Center surveys, SEA surveys, and protocols for the follow up interviews. Documentation of all IRB approval shall be submitted to the COR at the time the drafts are due to the Department (see task 8 and 9).
- 10.4 OMB Approval for Comprehensive Centers' and SEAs' surveys and interview protocols: The contractor shall prepare an OMB clearance package (and revised package, if necessary) that lists the Comprehensive Centers, describes the study design and data collection instruments, and includes the surveys and interview protocols required for OMB approval. The clearance packages should be ready for submission at months 6, 15, and 23 (reference tasks 8 and 9).

NOTE: The contractor may propose to consolidate some of these requirements to reduce the number of OMB submissions. In that case, the package shall be due at the earliest date of the included instruments as specified in this PWS.

Deliverables:

- Documentation for IRB approval for customer satisfaction surveys
- Draft and Final OMB clearance forms for customer satisfaction surveys
- Documentation for IRB approval for surveys and interview protocols to Center and SEA staff
- Draft and Final OMB clearance forms for surveys and interview protocols.

Task 11: **Prepare and Disseminate Formative Reports to Centers (Cost Reimbursement)**

The goal of the formative reports is to provide timely and useful feedback to Comprehensive Centers in order for them to have information that will help them improve services and products intended to build capacity in states (in the case of RCs) and in states and RCs (in the case of CCs) throughout the grant period. As the contractor develops the plans for this task, it shall consider the following criteria:

- Reports shall have explicit, clear, and compelling value to an individual Comprehensive Center or set of Comprehensive Centers.
- Reports shall be accessible and easy to use for the Centers, which requires attention to brevity, clear writing, and selective reporting.
- Reports shall not supplant the essential monitoring activities that each Center is expected to implement as a normal course of operating.
- Reports shall be based on the most straightforward and simple analyses available to answer questions of the report.
- Reports that provide data across Centers shall be sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

To ensure timely feedback to Centers, the contractor shall identify the type of reports that have the greatest likelihood of being beneficial to the Centers and then develop analytic plans for them. Tasks 11.2 and Tasks 11.3 provide guidance for the development of these plans.

11.1 **Overall Formative Reporting Plan:** By week 8, and then annually by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> week, the contractor shall provide an overall formative reporting plan that includes the proposed type (include purpose and audience) and quantity of reports that shall be completed for the upcoming year.

11.2 **Analysis Plans for Reports to Individual Centers:** The contractor shall prepare one analysis plan for each type of report that the contractor determines would be useful for Center improvement opportunities. Each analysis plan shall include the following information:

- Descriptive title of report
- Purpose of report (including explicit discussion on how a Center will use the report to inform planning decisions in the future)
- Data required and data sources
- Sampling decisions
- Specific analysis methods
- Reporting methods (including general outline and data shells)
- Proposed length of report
- Proposed schedule and list of Centers that will be receiving the report.



The contractor shall submit the first analytic plan for reports for individual Centers by week 9. Plans for other types of reports to individual Centers shall be submitted on an as-needed basis, based on recommendations from the contractor or requests from the Centers or the Department.

11.3 Analysis Plans for Reports to All or a Subset of Centers (Cross-Center Reports):

The contractor shall prepare one analysis plan for each type of report that will be prepared for all or a subset of Centers. Each analysis plan should include the following information:

- Descriptive title of report
- Purpose of report (including explicit discussion on how Centers will use the report to inform planning decisions in the future)
- Subsets of Centers the report will serve (e.g. All Centers? Only CCs? Centers with certain content focus?)
- Data required and data sources
- Sampling decisions required for analysis
- Specific analysis methods that will be used
- Reporting methods (including general outline, data shells, and how confidentiality issues between Centers will be addressed)
- Proposed length of report
- Proposed schedule and list of Centers that will be receiving the report.

The contractor shall submit the first analytic plan for cross-Center reports by week 11. Plans for additional types of cross-Center reports shall be submitted on an as-needed basis, based on recommendations from the contractor or requests from the Centers or the Department.

11.4 Drafts, Templates, and Final Reports: After a specific analysis plan has been approved and the analysis completed, the contractor shall submit a draft report of one Center (in the case of individual reports) and a group of centers (for the Cross Center reports) to the Department for review. The first draft report shall go through fairly extensive Department review (assume at least 2 rounds of review). However, once the report is finalized, reports to other Centers of the same analysis type *that have few adjustments from the original report* will be reviewed by the Department within two weeks.

11.5 Adaptations and Improvements of Reports Based on Feedback from Centers: Each year, the contractor shall solicit feedback from Centers on the usefulness and clarity of the formative reports. (This may be done as part of the surveys in Task 8 or as a stand-alone request.) The contractor shall submit a memo to the Department on specific recommendations for improvements for each report.

11.6 Annual Compilation of Reports: At the end of each contract year, the contractor shall create a document (online and 2 hard copies) that includes all formative

reports that were completed in that contract year. The reports shall be organized thematically (for instance, by lessons learned or common outcomes rather than chronologically), and include an introductory memo that summarizes the reports. With the exception of the last year, a draft of this compilation report shall be submitted to the Department 4 weeks after the end of each contract year and final drafts shall be submitted 4 weeks after Department review. In the last year of the contract, the contractor shall incorporate all reports into one report and submit 6 weeks before the last day of the contract. The final report shall be submitted on or before the final day of the contract.

Deliverables:

- Overall formative reporting plan—updated annually;
- Analysis plans for reports to individual Centers
- Analysis plans for reports to all or subset of Centers
- Drafts and final reports (as submitted)
- Memo recommending improvements to formative reports (annually)
- Compilations of Reports (annually)

**Task 12: Prepare Summative Report(s) (Cost Reimbursement)**

The goal of the summative report is not only to assess whether Comprehensive Centers have been successful at building capacity in the SEAs, but also to provide policy makers, education stakeholders, and technical assistance providers information about activities and processes that have a high probability of building capacity in SEAs. An interim and final report will be completed during the performance period. The reports shall describe the objectives, activities, and outcomes of the Centers, report on the quality, relevance, and utility of their services and products, and share lessons learned related to the goal of building capacity at the State Education Agency level.

- 12.1 Draft and Revised Analysis Plan for Interim and Final year Reports: The contractor shall provide the Department with a draft of an analysis plan by Month 6 of the contract. This document shall describe how all the data to be collected will be analyzed to address the study's research questions. All sampling decisions and statistical analyses shall be described in detail. A draft outline of the interim report shall also be included. The Department and TWG members shall review the first draft of the analysis plan within 4 weeks of submission, and the plan shall be discussed at the second TWG meeting.

The contractor shall provide the Department with a revised analysis plan 4 weeks after the TWG meeting. This draft shall include revisions in response to comments provided by the Department and TWG members on the first draft of the plan. Upon approval of the plan by the Department, the contractor shall use the plan to guide data analysis for the summative evaluation report.

- 12.2 Interim Report: Outline, Drafts, and Final: The contractor shall provide the Department with a detailed *outline* of the interim report by approximately Month 27 of the contract. The COR and an advisory panel consisting of TWG members and IES staff will review the outline within 10 business days.

The contractor shall provide the Department with a *first draft* of the interim report by approximately Month 28 (or a month after the SEA interviews are completed) of the contract. The interim report shall respond to all research questions. The report shall document the completion of services and products and how these services and products are linked to objectives and strategies of each Center. The report shall provide relevant summaries of ratings of quality, relevance, and utility of services and products, and note any patterns that these ratings may suggest. The report shall assess the extent to which SEA technical assistance needs are being met, and SEA and RCs capacities are being expanded. The report shall provide lessons learned on efforts to build capacity. If available at the time of the interim report, the report shall include information from further investigations conducted under Task 14. The COR, IES Disclosure Review Board (DRB), and selected TWG members will review the first draft of the interim report within 3 weeks (DRB may need a longer period for review).

The contractor shall provide the Department with a second draft of the interim report by approximately Month 30 of the contract. This draft shall include revision in response to comments provided by the Department on the first draft of the report. This draft shall be subject to IES' peer review process, an assessment of the report's technical quality conducted by an external expert, which is managed by IES' Standards and Review Office (SRO). Peer review may require multiple reviews and take up to 8 weeks or more.

The contractor shall provide the Department with a final version of the report by Month 34.

- 12.3 Final Report: Outline, Drafts, and Final: The contractor shall provide the Department with a detailed outline of the final report by Month 44 of the contract. The COR and an advisory panel consisting of TWG members and IES staff shall review the outline within 10 business days.

The contractor shall provide the Department with a first draft of the report by Month 46 of the contract. The report shall summarize findings documented in the interim report, update the findings based on new data, and provide comparisons of quality, relevance, and utility over time. The report shall provide a full summary of lessons learned on efforts to build capacity. As with the interim report, the report shall include any information from further investigations (Task 14) to provide context to sections of the report when applicable. This draft shall reflect any comments provided by the Department on the report outline. The COR, IES Disclosure Review Board, and selected TWG members shall review the first draft of the report within 3 weeks.



The contractor shall provide the Department with a second draft of the report by Month 48 of the contract. This draft shall include revision in response to comments provided by the Department on the first draft of the report. This draft shall be subject to IES' peer review process, an assessment of the report's technical quality conducted by an external expert. Peer review may take up to 8 weeks and require 2 to 3 rounds of review.

The contractor shall provide the Department with a final version of the report by Month 53.

- 12.4 Non-technical Summaries: One week following Department approval of the interim report, the contractor shall prepare an outline for a lessons learned non-technical document (or documents if the contractor recommends that the intent of these summaries can be better served with several documents rather than one) designed for education policy makers and practitioners. The contractor shall submit a cover memo with the outline that describes the approach that it plans to take, why the approach is appropriate for the intended audience, and the approximate planned length of the document(s). These summaries shall have a specific focus on issues that are actionable at the policy maker or practitioner level. They should differ from a typical executive summary in presentation, content focus, and organization.

A draft of the non-technical summary of the interim report shall be completed one month after the outline is approved by the Department, and the final draft of the interim summary report shall be completed within 2 months after first draft submission. The outline and cover memo for the non-technical summary for the final report shall be completed after the contractor receives the 2nd draft review of the final report (month 50). The draft is due month 52, and the final summary shall be complete by Month 54.

Deliverables:

- Draft and final analysis plan
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts of Interim Report
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts of Final Report
- Non-technical outline w/memo, drafts, and final summary of Interim Report
- Non-technical outline w/ memo, drafts, and final summary of the Final Report.

Task 13: Submit Progress Reports to the Department (Firm Fixed Price)

- 13.1 Monthly Progress Report/Exception Reports. The contractor shall prepare monthly progress reports due by the 8<sup>th</sup> calendar day of each month (and on the same day as the monthly expenditure report and invoice).<sup>14</sup> In 10 pages or less, the reports shall

<sup>14</sup> If the 8<sup>th</sup> day falls on a weekend or holiday, the report is due on the first business day following the 8<sup>th</sup>.

summarize the major activities and accomplishments for the reporting period, and identify any problems encountered. The reports shall specify the extent to which the project is on schedule, briefly describe the activities planned for the next month, identify and discuss significant deviations from the management plan, and identify and discuss any decisions which may be needed from the Department. If there are exceptions to the management plan, the contractor shall describe the plan for resolving the problems. If there are no exceptions, the reports shall state that there are no exceptions.

- 13.2 Monthly Staffing/Expenditure Reports. The contractor shall prepare monthly expenditure reports due by the 8<sup>th</sup> calendar day of each month and submitted concurrently with the invoice and monthly progress reports. These reports, prepared and signed by the project director, shall summarize the actual personnel assignments for the month just completed, showing for each staff member the hours charged by task. The report shall project similar assignment information for the upcoming month. The reports shall also exhibit expenditures, segregating project costs by individual and by task, and specifying for all travel the locations, duration, and personnel for each trip.

Deliverables:

- Monthly Progress reports
- Monthly Expenditure reports

Task 14: Optional Task: Propose, Prepare, Implement, and Report of Further Investigative Study Requiring Additional Data Collection (Cost Reimbursement)

At the option of the Department, the contractor may be authorized to conduct further study to inform issues or questions that arise as the study progresses. This option is intended to allow the contractor to explore relationships between the work of the Comprehensive Center and other steps of the logic model (see figure 2 and table 3) more thoroughly and deeply than the current collection activities allow. Depth, breadth, and number of questions to be explored shall be negotiated at the time that the need is identified. If the Department chooses to exercise this option, it shall be initiated at the end of month 16.

- 14.1 Analysis Plans: By the end of month 16 of the contract period, the contractor shall prepare a detailed data analysis plan that includes a discussion of the problem or questions that the investigation is meant to explore. If the contractor identifies several unrelated questions, then a separate plan will be required for each question. The plan shall include the research questions, sampling decisions, how the contractor shall use existing data from the current study to support the study, the type and cost of any additional data collection that is required (and whether the data collection will require IRB and OMB approval), detailed description of the proposed analytic methods, and a discussion and outline of how the study will be reported as a formative report (if applicable) and within the summative reports.

- 14.2 Meeting with the Department to Discuss Studies: Two weeks after the research plan is accepted, the contractor shall meet with the Department to discuss the performance of this task. This meeting shall occur in Washington, DC. A memo summarizing the important decisions and action points of the meeting shall be submitted within one week of the meeting.
- 14.3 Preparation of Data Collection Activities: The contractor shall prepare all data collection instruments required for this study as defined in the research plan in task 14.1. The contractor shall prepare all materials (including the OMB package submission) to the Department and relevant TWG members within 8 weeks of meeting with the Department. The Department and TWG members shall have 2 weeks to review and provide comments. The contractor shall have the package ready to submit to OMB within 14 weeks of the Task 14.2 meeting.
- 14.4 Documentation of IRB Approval: The contractor shall obtain approval from its IRB (and from the individual Centers IRBs, if necessary) for the work in this study.
- 14.5 Implement Data Collections Activities: The contractor shall implement the study using the data instruments developed in subtask 14.3. Updates on this process shall be discussed during the monthly calls (Task 1) and documented in the monthly progress reports (task 13).
- 14.6 Reports: Within 6 weeks of final data collection, the contractor shall submit an outline for reporting on the study. Although the intent of the study shall be to explore issues raised from the formative and summative reports, and thus, the data and analysis from the study shall be embedded in those reports, the contractor shall submit a draft report as if it will be a stand-alone supplement to the formative or summative reports. The draft shall be prepared for Department review 12 weeks after final collection of data for the study. The final report is due 20 weeks after final collection of data.
- 14.7 Progress reports: Monthly progress and expenditure reporting for this task shall be included in the reports submitted under task 13.

Deliverables:

- Draft and Final proposals for further investigative study with detailed analysis plans
- Memo summarizing meeting with the Department
- Data collection materials, draft and final
- OMB submission materials, draft and final
- IRB Approval
- Report—outline, draft, and final

In addition to the tasks above, the contractor shall comply with the Department's IT Security Policy whenever relevant. See Appendix A of this PWS.



**G. Schedule of Deliverables:** Unless otherwise noted within a respective task, the Department expects deliverables to be of sufficient high quality that three (3) or fewer revision cycles are required.

<b>Task 1: Meet with the Department</b> <i>Firm Fixed Price</i>		
1.1	Memo of key issues	• Two weeks after start up meeting
1.2	Summaries for monthly calls	• Two business days after calls
<b>Task 2: Identify and Convene a Technical Working Group</b> <i>Firm Fixed Price</i>		
2.1	Proposed list of experts	• Week 1 after award
2.2	Final list of experts	• Week 4 after award
2.3	Letters of commitment	• Week 6 after award
2.4a	Proposed agenda and materials	• Two weeks prior to meeting
2.4b	Written summary of meeting	• Two weeks after meetings
2.4c	TWG reviews of contractor products	• Five business days after receipt from members
<b>Task 3: Meet with Comprehensive Centers</b> <i>Firm Fixed Price</i>		
3.1	Schedule of planned meetings and site visits	• Week 3, and then annually (not year 5)
3.2	Agendas for site visits	• Two weeks before travel
<b>Task 4: Develop, Implement, and Refine a Common Tracking Template</b> <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
4.1	Template	• Draft—week seven of award • Final w/ centers comments—End of month four
4.3a	Memo of intent for refining template	• 2 months and 2 weeks after full implementation of template
4.3b	Refined template	• If needed – timeline TBD
<b>Task 5: Build Capacity within Centers to use the RBM or Alternative Framework</b> <i>Firm Fixed Price</i>		
5.1	Plan and agendas for each webinar	• Two weeks before scheduled webinar
5.2	Memo of proposed outcomes	• Draft--Week nine from award • Final—Week 12 from award
5.3	Memo summarizing indicators and data sources	• Months 6, 18, & 30 • Drafts due three weeks prior.

Task 6: Develop and Analyze Customer Satisfaction Surveys <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
6.1a	Customer satisfaction survey instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft due month five;</li> <li>Ready for OMB by month seven</li> </ul>
6.2	Simple analyses of each survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two weeks after receiving data</li> </ul>
Task 7: Create and Manage Peer Review System <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
7.1&7.2	Recommendation for sampling plan for peer review system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft--End of month 7</li> <li>Final--six weeks before year 2</li> </ul>
7.1	Feedback memos to Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the Department – 10 business days after receiving reviews from peer reviewers</li> </ul>
7.1	Summary sheet of themes found in the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As needed.</li> </ul>
7.2	Annual updated proposed sampling plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six weeks before contact year 3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>
7.3	List of Reviewers with qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft due end of month 8;</li> <li>Final due end of month 9;</li> </ul>
7.3	Letters of commitment and consulting rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End of month ten.</li> </ul>
7.4	Review forms and rubrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft due end of month 8;</li> <li>Revised draft due by end of month 10</li> <li>Final due end of month 11.</li> </ul>
7.5	Crosswalk Memos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Months 18, 30, &amp; 42</li> </ul>
Task 8: Develop, Distribute and Analyze Surveys for SEA and Comprehensive Center Staff <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
8.1a	Survey Instrument for SEA staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft due month 14;</li> <li>Ready for OMB month 15</li> </ul>
8.1b	Two rounds of SEA staff survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Months 20 &amp; 39</li> </ul>
8.1c	Memos reporting descriptive data of SEA surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Months 23 &amp; 42</li> </ul>
8.2a	Survey Instrument for Center staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft due month 4;</li> <li>Ready for OMB month 6</li> </ul>
8.2b	Four rounds of Center staff surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Months 11, 23, 34, 47</li> </ul>
8.2c	Memos reporting descriptive data of Center staff surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Months 14, 26, 36, 51</li> </ul>

<b>Task 9: Conduct interviews with SEA and Comprehensive Center staff</b> <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
9.1a	Interview Protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafts due months 22 &amp; 43</li> <li>• Ready for OMB month 23</li> </ul>
9.1b	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Months 29-30; 44-45</li> </ul>
9.1c	Memo to the Department summarizing main issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Months 32 &amp; 53</li> </ul>
<b>Task 10: Prepare and submit documents to IRB and OMB for approval of data collection activities</b> <i>Firm Fixed Price</i>		
10.1	Documentation for IRB approval for customer satisfaction surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Month 6</li> </ul>
10.2	OMB clearance forms for customer satisfaction surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft due month six;</li> <li>• Ready for OMB by month seven</li> </ul>
10.3	Documentation for IRB approval for surveys and interview protocols to Center and SEA staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on Contractor plan</li> </ul>
10.4	OMB clearance forms for surveys and interview protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on Contractor plan</li> </ul>
<b>Task 11: Prepare and Disseminate Formative Reports to Centers</b> <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
11.1	Overall formative reporting plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 8, and then 2nd week of every new contract year.</li> </ul>
11.2	Analysis plan for reports to individual Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First plan is due week 9;</li> <li>• Other plans, as needed</li> </ul>
11.3	Analysis plan for cross-Center reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First plan is due week 11;</li> <li>• Other plans, as needed.</li> </ul>
11.4	Drafts and final reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As submitted</li> </ul>
11.5	Memo recommending improvements to formative reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Months 14, 26, 38</li> </ul>
11.7	Compilations of Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft due 4 weeks after each contract year;</li> <li>• Final due 4 weeks after the Department review;</li> <li>• For last contract year, draft due 6 weeks before end of contract, and final due on last day.</li> </ul>



<b>Task 12: Prepare Summative Reports</b> <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
12.1	Analysis Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1st draft due month 6;</li> <li>• 2nd draft due four weeks after 2nd TWG mtg</li> </ul>
12.2	Interim Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline due month 27;</li> <li>• First draft due month 28;</li> <li>• Second draft due month 30;</li> <li>• Final due month 34</li> </ul>
12.3	Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline due month 44;</li> <li>• First draft due month 46;</li> <li>• Second draft due month 48;</li> <li>• Final Report due month 53</li> </ul>
12.4a	Non-technical summary of interim report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline with memo due one week after Department approval of interim report;</li> <li>• Draft due one month after the Department approval of outline;</li> <li>• Final due two months after the Department approval of first draft submission</li> </ul>
12.4b	Non-technical summary of the final report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline with memo due month 50;</li> <li>• Draft due month 52;</li> <li>• Final due month 54</li> </ul>
<b>Task 13: Submit Progress Reports to the Department</b> <i>Firm Fixed Price</i>		
13.1	Monthly Progress Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8th calendar day of each month.</li> </ul>
13.2	Monthly Expenditure Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8th calendar day of each month</li> </ul>
<b>Task 14: Propose, Prepare, Implement and Report on Further Investigative Study Requiring Additional Data Collection</b> <i>Cost Reimbursement</i>		
14.1a	Analysis Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Month 16</li> </ul>
14.1b	Memo requesting later submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Month 16</li> </ul>
14.2	Memo summarizing meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 week after meeting with the Department</li> </ul>
14.3	Preparation of Data Collection Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft due 8 weeks after meeting with the Department</li> <li>• Ready for OMB submission, 14 weeks after meeting with the Department</li> </ul>
14.4	Documentation of IRB Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before final OMB submission</li> </ul>

14.5	Implement Data Collection Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updates in monthly mtgs and reports</li></ul>
14.6	Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outlines—6 weeks after final collection of data</li><li>• Drafts—12 weeks after final collection of data</li><li>• Finals—20 weeks after final collection of data</li></ul>

## APPENDIX A:

Compliance with the Department's IT Security Policy

When relevant, the contractor, and all sub-contractors, shall comply with the Department of Education's IT security policy requirements, specifically those set forth in the 'Handbook for Information Assurance Security Policy (OCIO-01)', and other applicable procedures and guidance. The contractor, and all sub-contractors, shall develop and implement management, operational and technical security controls to assure required levels of protection for information systems. The contractor, and all sub-contractors, shall further comply with all applicable Federal IT security requirements including, but not limited to, the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-130 Appendix III, Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards and guidance.

These security requirements include, but are not limited to, the successful Certification and Accreditation (C&A) or Security Authorization (SA) of the system (includes commercially owned and operated systems managed by the commercial vendor and its sub-contractors, supporting Department programs, contracts, and projects); obtaining a full Authority to Operate (ATO) before being granted operational status; performance of annual self-assessments of security controls; annual Contingency Plan testing; performance of periodic vulnerability scans; updating all information system security documentation as changes occur; and other continuous monitoring activities, which may include, mapping, penetration and other intrusive scanning. Full and unfettered access for the Department's third party Managed Security Services Provider (MSSP) must be granted to access all computers and networks used for this system. Additionally, when there is a significant change to the system's security posture, the system (Federal and commercial prime- and sub- contractors included) must have a new C&A or SA, with all required activities to obtain a new ATO, signed by the Authorizing Official (AO).

System security controls shall be designed and implemented consistent with NIST SP 800-53 Rev 3, 'Recommended Security Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations.' All NIST SP 800-53 controls must be tested / assessed no less than every 3 years, according to federal and Department policy. The risk impact level of the system will be determined via the completion of the Department's inventory form and shall meet the accurate depiction of security categorization as outlined in Federal Information Publishing Standards (FIPS) 199, 'Standards for Security Categorization of Federal Information and Information Systems.'

System security documentation shall be developed to record and support the implementation of the security controls for the system. This documentation shall be maintained for the life of the system. The contractor, and all sub-contractors, shall review and update the system security documentation at least annually and after significant changes to the system, to ensure the relevance and accurate depiction of the implemented system controls and to reflect changes to the system and its environment of



operation. Security documentation must be developed in accordance with the NIST 800 series and Department of Education policy and guidance.

The contractor, and all sub-contractors, shall allow Department employees (or Department designated third party contractors) access to the hosting facility to conduct C&A/SA activities to include control reviews in accordance with NIST SP 800-53, Rev. 3 and NIST SP 800-53A. The contractor, and all sub-contractors, shall be available for interviews and demonstrations of security control compliance to support the C&A/SA process and continuous monitoring of system security. In addition, if the system is rated as 'Moderate' or 'High' for FIPS 199 risk impact, vulnerability scanning and penetration testing shall be performed on the hosting facility and application as part of the C&A/SA process. Appropriate access agreements will be reviewed and signed before any scanning or testing occurs.

Identified deficiencies between required NIST SP 800-53 Rev. 3 controls and the contractor's, and all sub-contractor's implementation, as documented in the Risk Assessment Report, System Security Plan (SSP) and Security Assessment Report (SAR), shall be tracked for mitigation through the development of a Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M) in accordance with the 'Handbook for Information Assurance Security Policy (OCIO-01).' Depending on the severity of the deficiencies, the Department may require remediation before an ATO is issued.

All awarded contracts shall ensure that:

- Their IT product/system is monitored during all hours of operations using entrusted detective/preventive systems;
- Their IT product/system has current antiviral products installed and operational;
- Their IT product/system is scanned on a reoccurring basis;
- Vulnerabilities are remediated in a timely manner on their IT product/system; and
- Access/view for cyber security situational awareness on their IT product/system is made available to the Department CIRC (cyber incident response capability).

For Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6), the contractor shall provide COTS solutions that are IPv6 capable. An IPv6 capable system or product shall be capable of receiving, processing, transmitting and forwarding IPv6 packets and/or interfacing with other systems and protocols in a manner similar to that of IPv4. Specific criteria to be deemed IPv6 capable are:

An IPv6 capable system that meets the IPv6 base requirements defined by the USGv6 Profile and Testing program as found here: <http://w3.antd.nist.gov/usgv6/testing.html>. Systems being developed, procured or acquired shall maintain interoperability with IPv4 systems/capabilities.

Systems shall implement IPv4/IPv6 dual-stack and shall also be built to determine which protocol layer to use depending on the destination host it is attempting to communicate with or establish a socket with. If either protocol is possible, systems shall employ IPv6.

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The contractor shall provide IPv6 technical support for system development, implementation and management.

Contractor Employee Security Screening Requirements:

The Department has established policy on personnel security screening for all contractor and subcontractor employees and their field staff. The relevant Departmental Directive is OM:5-101. It was last updated in July 2010 and can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/acsom5101.pdf>. The contractor must comply with the personnel security-screening requirements in OM:5-101 throughout the life of the contract.

All contractor and subcontractor employees must undergo personnel security screening if they will be employed for thirty (30) days or more.

The type of screening and the timing of the screening will depend upon the nature of the contractor position, the type of data the contractor employee will have access to, or the type of Departmental information technology (IT) system they will access. Personnel security screenings shall be commensurate with the risk and magnitude of harm the individual could cause to the Department or the public. A position risk level will be assigned to each contractor employee position, before a solicitation is released, consistent with the descriptions in Appendix I of OM: 5-101. Hence, each contractor employee working on this contract must be assigned a position risk level. Depending on the risk level assigned to each person's position, a follow-up background investigation by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may occur.

The contractor must identify one of their employees as a security liaison for this process. This Contractor Security Liaison coordinates the distribution, collection, and dissemination of various forms required in this process. They answer general questions from their employees on completing the security screening process. And, they are the first point of contact for contractor employees in using the OPM's Internet based security screening portal called e-QIP ( <http://www.opm.gov/e-qip/> ). The contractor is also responsible for ensuring that all subcontractors follow these personnel security screening procedures.

NCES requires each contractor employee to have or apply for a clearance for the security level designated for the position held on a contract.

Contractor employees who have undergone appropriate personnel security screening for another Federal agency shall be required to submit proof of that personnel security screening for validation. For these employees, the contractor or subcontractor must follow these required steps:

1. The contractor must send the COR a letter on Company letterhead that lists the full name of each employee with a pre-existing clearance, the agency that cleared the employee, the level of the clearance, and the date of the clearance. This letter must be

transmitted to the COR within two (2) business days of starting work on an NCES contract.

2. In those cases where any of the required information on level of clearance, agency that cleared the employee and date of clearance is not available, the contractor must send the COR a letter on Company letterhead that lists the full name and Social Security Number for each employee with a pre-existing clearance. This letter must be transmitted to the COR within two (2) business days of starting work on an NCES contract.
3. The COR will transmit the letter to the NCES Security Representative for processing.
4. The NCES Security Representative reviews the letter to ensure that the required information is provided and either returns it to the contractor for completion or releases it to the Department of Education Chief of Personnel Security. The contractor must resubmit the letter to the COR within 7 business days or the contractor employee must be removed from the contract.
5. The NCES Security Representative will notify the contractor or subcontractor if the pre-existing clearance was identified and ruled to be acceptable by the Department of Education Chief of Personnel Security.
6. Those employees whose pre-existing clearances are not verified and approved must follow the process outlined next to apply for a security clearance.

For contractor employees who have not undergone appropriate personnel security screening for another Federal agency, all contractors must comply with the Principal Office (PO) Executive Office or Computer Security Officer's pre-processing requirements for personnel security screening and granting access privileges. No contractor employees are permitted unsupervised access to unclassified sensitive information (i.e., personally identifiable information), direct access to respondents who are minors, or Department of Education IT systems until they have submitted applicable security screening documents.

For each contractor employee in a moderate risk level position the completed security screening documents must be accepted by the COR and the NCES Security Representative and submitted to the Department of Education Chief of Personnel Security within 14 days of the date the contractor employee starts working on the contract. In order to meet this Departmental requirement, steps 1 through 7 must be completed within 14 days of the date the contractor employee starts working on the contract. To meet this 14 day deadline and the interim deadlines specified below, it is strongly recommended that the contractor request the account initiation three (3) weeks before the contractor employee starts contract work and encourage each contractor employee to complete all required security screening forms before starting contract work.

Contractor employees in High Risk IT (6C) Level positions require preliminary personnel security screenings before they are given access to unclassified sensitive information or Department of Education IT systems (see page 7 of OM:5-101 for more details).

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The security screening of contractor and subcontractor employees not holding Department recognized security screening credentials must follow these required steps:

1. The contractor must provide the COR with an electronic listing of all employees on a specific contract, with the risk level associated with the position held by each employee as specified in the contract solicitation. The COR will review the electronic listing for completeness and approve. The listing will not be approved if it is found to be incomplete.
2. The Department of Education participates in the OPM e-QIP system to facilitate the security screening process for contractor employees. NCES will initiate an e-QIP account for each contractor employee. It is advisable to request the account initiation three (3) weeks before the contractor employee starts contract work. For the initiation of these accounts, the Contractor Security Liaison must use the COR-approved list of employees and the risk levels assigned to the employees' positions to produce and submit the following list using the attached template:
  - a. For each contractor employee provide: Social Security Number, Full Name, Date of Birth, Place of Birth, risk level, e-Mail Address, and phone number. The Contractor Security Liaison must place the spreadsheet in a password protected file, then upload the list to the NCES secure server, and send an e-mail notification of the transmission to the NCES Security Representative. The NCES security staff will use this list to establish the contractor employee e-QIP accounts. The COR will work with the contractor to establish access to the NCES secure server at the outset of the contract.
  - b. Once NCES sets up the e-QIP accounts for contract employees, the NCES Security Representative will send an email to the Contractor Security Liaison stating that the employee has an active account on the e-QIP system. The COR is copied on this email notification.
  - c. The Contractor Security Liaison must notify their employees of this active account. A computer with Internet access and web browsing software is required for the contractor employee to access their E-QIP account. Each employee must log into their personal account in e-QIP, enter the requested information, finish the application process and print, sign, and date the e-QIP signature pages.
3. Each contractor employee must submit a completed set of security screening forms to their Contractor Security Liaison as provided by the NCES Security Representative, including for example:
  - a. The signed and dated e-QIP signature pages,
  - b. The Declaration of Federal Employment (OPM form OF-306),
  - c. The Fair Credit Release Form,
  - d. The Request for Security Officer Action (RSA) Form,

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- 1) The contractor employee shall complete only those items in section 1 of the form (name, date of birth, place of birth, organization, position title, duty station, social security number, and work phone number).
  - 2) The contractor shall complete section 5 (Project Requiring Highest ADP Level) using the assigned security clearance for each employee's position.
- c. Two sets of fingerprints on separate copies of form FD-258,
  - 1) The Contractor Security Liaison shall help arrange fingerprinting for each contractor and subcontractor employee. Fingerprinting can usually be done at a local police station. (Electronic fingerprints are not accepted at this time.)
4. Each contractor must ensure that the forms are complete and that all contractor employee required security screening forms are transmitted to the COR within two (2) business days of an employee starting work on an NCES contract.
  - a. The Contractor Security Liaison must collate the forms in each security screening package by employee and transmit a complete set of security screening documents for each employee to the COR via courier (e.g., Federal Express) using a tracking number with signature required.
  - b. The COR shall not accept security screening packages that are not collated by employee (i.e., all forms noted in point 3 above shall be bundled by employee). The COR will review all security screening documents for each contractor employee for completeness, returning any incomplete security screening documents to the Contractor Security Liaison for completion. The contractor must resubmit the completed security screening documents to the COR within 7 business days or the contractor employee must be removed from the contract. No contractor employees are permitted unsupervised access to unclassified sensitive information (personally identifiable information), direct access to respondents who are minors, or Department of Education IT systems until they have resubmitted applicable screening documents.
5. The COR will submit the completed packages of security screening documents to the NCES Security Representative for processing.
6. The NCES Security Representative reviews each package of security screening documents and electronic information submission to ensure everything required has been provided and either rejects the package, sending it back to the submitter for completion/correction or releases it to the Department of Education Chief of Personnel Security. In the event that an application is rejected at this stage, the contractor must resubmit the corrected forms to the COR, or have the contractor employee correct the e-QIP submission, within two business days. The NCES Security Representative must be notified as soon as the updated e-QIP submission is completed.

7. The contractor employee application for each individual in a moderate risk level position must be submitted to the Department of Education Chief of Personnel Security within 14 days of the date the contractor employee starts working on the contract. Contractor employees in High Risk IT (6C) Level positions require preliminary personnel security screenings before they are given access to unclassified sensitive information or Department of Education IT systems.
8. After a package of security screening documents is transmitted to the Department of Education Chief of Personnel Security, the Office of Management security staff conducts a further review and either rejects the package of security screening documents, sending it back to the submitter for completion/correction or releases it to OPM.
9. OPM then assigns an investigator to conduct the type of investigation indicated by the department (this is tied to the level of access to PII that the applicant will have).
10. The Chief of Personnel Security will request the expansion of background investigations to obtain additional information to the extent necessary to make personnel acceptability or suitability determinations. These determinations will be made using criteria established by the OPM for the purpose of determining suitability for employment in the Federal competitive service, as described in 5 CFR 731.202, and other OPM guidance as applicable. The Chief of Personnel Security determines whether a contractor employee is acceptable for the position from a personnel security standpoint.
11. When the OPM investigation is complete, the RSA form with the clearance indicated is sent to the Department of Education's Office of Management for processing.
12. The Office of Management returns the RSA form to the NCES Security Representative for recordation and distribution to the COR.
13. The COR transmits the RSA form with clearance indicated to the Contractor Security Liaison for their records and for distribution to the Contract Project Leader.
14. The Contract Project Leader then distributes copies of the clearance to the employee.
15. The Chief of Personnel Security will inform the NCES COR when he or she determines that a contractor employee is not acceptable to render service(s) or, if appropriate, to otherwise perform under a contract.
16. Each contractor shall officially notify its contractor employee if he or she will no longer work on a Department contract.
17. In the event a contractor employee is deemed unacceptable for the position from a personnel security standpoint, the Chief of Personnel Security will usually provide the



contractor employee with an opportunity to refute, explain, clarify, or mitigate information in question.

18. If, after final determination by the Chief of Personnel Security, a decision is made that the contractor employee is not acceptable to render services on a contract and access is denied, the COR shall inform the Contracting Officer. The Contracting Officer must inform the contractor (i.e. employing firm) that the contractor employee is not acceptable to render services in this particular position, or, if appropriate, to otherwise perform under the contract. The contractor shall notify the contractor employee. A final determination cannot be appealed.
19. At any time during the life of the contract a contractor or subcontractor employee (including any field staff) discontinues work on the contract or leaves the employment of the contractor, the contractor shall notify the COR within two business days of the date that the employee is no longer working on the contract or within one business day if removed for cause. The contractor shall provide the reason why the employee is no longer working on the contract. The COR will provide this information to the NCES Security Representative.
20. Each contractor is responsible for the protection of sensitive or Privacy Act-protected information from unauthorized use or misuse by its employees, subcontractors, or temporary workers, and for preventing access to others, who are not authorized and have no need to know such information.
21. The contractor shall submit monthly information to the COR indicating which employees were billed to the contract that include the e-QIP number of the person being billed. The COR shall reject payments to employees without an e-QIP number. For employees with pre-existing clearances from other contracts, this shall be noted on the monthly payment form.

The contractor shall verify with the COR that the security screening processes have not changed by the time the contract is active.

**Attachment H**  
**Comprehensive Center Evaluation**  
**National Center for Education Evaluation**  
**Revised Pricing Schedule for Fixed Price Deliverables**  
**March 1, 2013**

The contractor shall submit one copy of the final deliverable to the CO; all other deliverables are submitted to the COR. The contractor shall submit an electronic copy of all deliverables to the COR unless otherwise specified.

**For 54 Month Period of Performance:**

<b>Task 1:</b>	<b>Meet with ED</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Price</b>
1.1	Memo of Key Issues	Two weeks after start up meeting	
1.2	Summaries for Monthly Calls	2 days after calls	
<b>Task 1 Total:</b>			
<b>Task 2:</b>	<b>Identify and Convene a Technical Working Group</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Price</b>
2.1	Proposed List of Experts	Week one after award	
2.2	Final List of Experts	Week four after award	
2.3	Letters of Commitment	Week six after award	
2.4a	Proposed agenda and materials	Two weeks prior to meeting	
2.4b	Written Summary of Meeting	Two weeks after meeting	
2.4c	TWG Reviews of Products	Five days after receipt from members	
<b>Task 2 Total:</b>			
<b>Task 3:</b>	<b>Meet with Comprehensive Centers</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Price</b>
3.1	Schedule of Planned Visits	Week three, then annually	
3.3a	Agendas for Meetings & Site visits	Two weeks before each meeting	
<b>Task 3 Total:</b>			

<b>Task 5:</b>	<b>Build Capacity within Centers to use the RBM framework</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Price</b>
5.1	Plan and Agendas for each webinar	Two weeks before each scheduled webinar	
5.2	Memo of proposed outcomes--Draft	Draft--Week nine from award Final--Week 12 from award	
5.3a	Memo summarizing indicators and data sources	Draft--Three weeks prior to final Final--Months 6, 18, 30	
<b>Task 5 Total:</b>			
<b>Task 10:</b>	<b>Prepare and submit documents to IRB and OMB for approval of data collection activities</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Price</b>
10.1	Documentation for IRB approval for customer satisfaction surveys	Month 6	
10.2	OMB clearance forms for customer satisfaction surveys—	Draft—Month 6 Ready for OMB—Month 7	
10.3	Documentation for IRB approval for surveys and interview protocols to Center and SEA staff	Dependent on Contractor plan	
10.4	OMB clearance forms for surveys and interview protocols:	Draft--Dependent on Contractor Plan Final -- One month after Draft	
<b>Task 10 Total:</b>			
<b>Task 13:</b>	<b>Submit Progress Reports to ED</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Price</b>
13.1	Monthly Progress Reports	8 <sup>th</sup> calendar day of each month	
13.2	Monthly Expenditure Reports	8 <sup>th</sup> calendar day of each month	
<b>Task 13 Total:</b>			



RFP # ED-IES-12-R-0103

Amendment 0002\_03/01/2013 ATTACHMENTS

L. 10 INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFERORS (revised Amendment 0002\_03/01/2013)

Offerors shall prepare separate technical and business proposals for the project. The technical proposals must not contain reference to specific costs, although resource information may be included so that the offeror's understanding of the scope of the work may be evaluated. Cost information shall be restricted to the business proposal. The offeror shall include past performance information in a separate volume (as outlined below.) Each proposal shall be separate and complete in itself so that evaluation of one may be accomplished independently of the other.

The three binders include:

- I. Technical Volume
- II. Business Volume
- III. Past Performance Volume

A. Proposal Submission Format

Offerors must submit the proposal electronically in WORD AND PDF format and the business proposal as an EXCEL WORKBOOK AND PDF to [Sharon.Masciana@ed.gov](mailto:Sharon.Masciana@ed.gov) and courtesy copy to [Veronica.Price@ed.gov](mailto:Veronica.Price@ed.gov). In addition, you must submit one original and 5 hard copies of your technical proposal and one original and 3 hard copies of your business proposal. The proposals shall not be bound; offerors are encouraged to submit proposals in ring binders. Offerors are encouraged to conserve paper by copying double-sided. Offerors are encouraged to submit proposals on recycled paper with a high post-consumer waste content.

Proposals are due by 2:00 PM, ET on May 3, 2013, and shall be delivered to:

U.S. Department of Education  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer  
Contracts and Acquisitions Management  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, LBJ Building, Room BC102  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4230  
Attn: Sharon Masciana, Contract Specialist

IMPORTANT NOTE:

All offerors shall be aware that packages sent to the U.S. Department of Education through FEDEX, UPS, U.S. Postal Service, or hand-carried will no longer be accepted by the point of contact in the Contracts and Acquisitions Management office. All packages

must go through the Department's Mail Room located at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, LBJ Building, Room BC102, Washington, D.C. 20202-4230 (see complete address above).

Contact information: Mail Room Phone number: (202) 401-0969

Hours: 7:00 am to 5:00 pm ET

In addition, the Department recommends that the delivery person provide and/or obtain a receipt for the proposal that gives the date and time the proposal enters the Federal facility. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Hand-carried proposals must be delivered by entering through the building and stopping at the Guard's Desk. Offerors shall indicate for which RFP they are submitting a proposal and shall have proper identification.

FAR Clause 52.215-11, Instructions to Offerors – Competitive Acquisition, shall apply to this submission. The outside of the proposal packaging, the cover of each proposal and the header of each proposal page shall contain the title "Comprehensive Center Evaluation." The Government will evaluate proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in the Technical Evaluation Criteria of this request. It is understood that your proposal will become a part of the official contract file. The RFP does not commit the Government to pay any cost for the preparation and submission of a proposal. In addition, the Contracting Officer is the only individual who can legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds in connection with this proposed acquisition. This solicitation will be awarded contingent on the availability of funds, FAR 52.232-18, Availability of Funds.

**B. Proposal Validity Period and Cognizant Entity**

The proposal shall list the names and telephone numbers of persons authorized to conduct negotiations, and a statement to the effect that your offer is firm for a period of at least 90 calendar days from the date of receipt of offers specified by the Government.

**C. Clarification Questions**

ED will accept clarification questions until **March 8, 2013**. All clarification questions must be submitted by 12:30 noon ET, **March 8, 2013**. After this date the Department does not guarantee that a response will be given. If an offeror submits a clarification question prior to the above date they will not receive a response until all questions have been received by the due date. Clarification responses will be posted on <https://www.fbo.gov/>. All questions and answers will be provided to all offerors.

Any information given to a prospective offeror concerning a solicitation will be furnished promptly to all other prospective offerors if that information is

necessary in submitting offers or if a lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective offerors.

The Government will not be obligated to provide any equipment or a work site.

I. **Volume I. Technical Proposal**

The offeror must show a thorough understanding of the goals and activities of the Performance Work Statement (PWS).

The technical proposals must describe the offeror's plans to accomplish each activity and the relevant deliverables. Offerors are encouraged to suggest improvements to the approaches in the PWS. However, the offeror must provide a justification of how the proposed alternatives will address the purposes of the study more effectively than the suggestions described in the PWS. Offerors may also find it necessary to make adjustments in the schedule provided in the PWS, in accordance with the strategies, operations, and procedures that they propose. In this case, offerors shall clearly identify any changes from the schedule in the PWS and explain the rationale for the changes.

Proposals shall be no more than 80 pages, not including appendices.

Proposals shall be double-spaced with a 12-point font size and margins of at least 1 inch. The pages shall also be double-sided.

Proposals shall include the following:

(Guidance for these sections is described below.)

- Cover Sheet (not included in page count) Table of Contents (not included in page count)
- Overview
- Technical Approach
- Personnel
- Management Plan
- Appendices (not included in page count)

Cover Sheet

A cover sheet with the name and address of the firm, as well as the signature of an officer of the firm must be submitted with each proposal volume. Offerors must also provide a summary list of the following information on the Technical Proposal Volume's cover page:

- 1) The name of the sub-contractors
- 2) The size of each subcontractor



- 3) The percentage that will be given to each subcontractor from your total budget. Do **not** provide actual dollar amounts in the technical proposal.
- 4) The task/subtask that will be done by each subcontractor.

#### Table of Contents

The table of contents shall include the identification of the key authors of each section, by name and proposed role in the project.

#### Overview

Offerors shall provide an introduction demonstrating a clear understanding of the mission and work of the Comprehensive Center Program. The introduction shall also demonstrate an understanding of recent efforts and challenges related to building capacity in State Education Agencies. The overview shall briefly describe the technical plan the offeror proposes to examine the research questions for the evaluation, and provide rationales for why the proposed approach will meet the intent and requirements of the contract. Offerors shall highlight any unique features or approaches included in their proposals.

#### Technical Approach

Offerors shall completely and concisely explain the strategies, operations, and procedures they propose to achieve the study's objectives, addressing each task and subtask (1-13— See appendix D for task 14). When applicable to the task or subtask, the offeror should address the design issues listed on page 14-16 of the PWS. The offeror shall provide enough specificity for a reviewer to understand the *action* that the offeror will undertake in regards to each task/subtask. (The Department strongly recommends that the offeror avoid rhetoric and repeating information from the PWS.) The offeror shall include a proposed timeline addressing the tasks and deliverables, with a summary table presenting critical milestones with dates (starting and ending dates of each major project task and activity). When a proposed strategy or deliverable differs from a task or subtask requirement as stated in the PWS, the offeror must acknowledge how the proposal is different from the PWS and provide sound justification for the difference.

#### Personnel

Offerors shall provide the names of the proposed project director and other key personnel and consultants, as well as a narrative description of staff qualifications as they relate to the requirements of the contract and their proposed role. Offerors shall indicate the number of proposed hours of each staff person by task/subtask and shall describe the specific responsibilities of each proposed staff person. To indicate the availability of staff persons to work on this contract, offerors shall also include the proportion of each staff person's time that is committed to other projects (including but not limited to federal and non-federal obligations and outside consulting assignments). The contractor will determine all the labor categories and staffing levels appropriate for completing the goals of the project. All contractor staff shall be United States citizens or legal permanent residents.

Management Plan

Offerors shall demonstrate how they propose to manage and coordinate contract operations and personnel working on the contract, including any subcontractors and consultants. Offerors shall describe how they propose to ensure the completion of the work of the contract on time, within budget, and to the Department standards of acceptable quality. Offerors shall describe functional responsibilities, lines of communication and authority for project management, including any sub-contractual arrangements. Offerors shall include an organizational chart that shows lines of authority and responsibility in the conduct of the project. Offerors shall discuss their internal quality control plan that addresses accountability in each task area. Offerors shall provide a staff loading chart showing all time commitments for all staff proposed including subcontractors and consultants. Please label each staff by their affiliation.

Appendices—Supporting Documentation

*Appendix A: Proposed List of Experts for the Technical Working Group*

Offerors shall include proposed members of the TWG, with one to two page Curriculum Vitae. The offeror shall provide an introductory memo (one single spaced page) that describes the offeror's rationale for including the particular combination of proposed TWG members

*Appendix B: Sample Customer Satisfaction Survey*

Offerors shall provide a sample of a customer satisfaction survey that they believe would address the intentions of Task 6 in the PWS. The offeror shall provide an introductory memo (up to 2 single-spaced pages) that justifies decisions related to number, content, and type of questions included in the survey. If the customer satisfaction survey is one that the offeror has used in the past, the offeror shall discuss in what ways the analysis was used to improve customer service delivery.

*Appendix C: Exemplar Report*

Offerors shall provide an example of a formative report (or portion of a report) that they have used to provide feedback to an organization (a report similar to the intent of Task 11). If the offeror does not have an actual report to submit, then the offeror should provide a mockup of a report that demonstrates capability in this area. The report shall be no longer than six 8.5" by 11" sized pages. All other formatting options (font size, color, etc.) are acceptable. The offeror shall provide an introductory memo (up to 2 single-spaced pages--not included in the 6 page count) to provide the context of the report including the intended audience, distribution, and methodology (if not included in report). The offeror shall also explain how the content and presentation are aligned with the intended audience. Text can be redacted to protect anonymity.

*Appendix D: Technical proposal(s) for Optional Task 14.*

Optional Task 14 is designed to leave flexibility for further study if questions arise as the evaluation progresses. Therefore, the task is loosely defined on purpose in order to give the Department and the contractor the opportunity to fill a need that the Department is

unable to identify before data collection begins. However, offerors shall propose a study that they believe would be feasible and useful to supplement the currently proposed study. The offerors may choose to use the earlier Comprehensive Center evaluation as background for their proposal found at the following weblink: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=NCEE20114031>. The proposal shall include the components listed in Task 14.1. This Appendix shall not exceed 12 double-spaced pages which shall include personnel and management approach.

*Appendix E: Resumes of Key Personnel*

Offerors shall provide resumes for key personnel that describe each person's professional background, including degrees held and specializations, along with professional experience relevant to their proposed labor category/position. The resumes of proposed key staff shall be no longer than 4 pages each. The resumes must highlight the roles that the proposed key staff played in research projects that *involve skills and experience relevant to this procurement*.

*Appendix F: Related Corporate Experience*

*The offeror shall provide examples of relevant corporate experience in Appendix F, addressing the following capabilities:*

- Experience in designing and applying clear criteria to a range of research-based products, such as reports, briefs, and how-to guides, etc.
- Experience in designing and applying clear criteria to a range of technical assistance services, such as training, meeting facilitation, conferences, and ongoing consultations.
- Experience in executing non-experimental and descriptive studies with the highest technical quality.
- Experience in writing about research and findings for a range of audiences, including practitioners and policymakers.
- Experience being responsive to changing needs and deploying staff appropriately.

**II. Volume II. - Business Proposal**

**A. Offerors shall provide the following information on the business proposal cover sheet:**

- 1) The name of the subcontractors;
- 2) The size of each subcontractor;
- 3) The percentage that will be given to each subcontractor from your total budget. Specific dollar amounts shall be provided along with percentages.
- 4) The task/subtask that will be done by each subcontractor.

**B. Contract Type**

The Department anticipates awarding a hybrid contract on Tasks 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, and 13 on a Firm Fixed Price (FFP) basis, and on Tasks 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 on a



Cost-Reimbursement (CR) basis. The optional task, Task 14, will also be Cost-Reimbursement. Offerors shall include the price of each deliverable for all Fixed-Price Tasks.

C. Pricing and Payment Schedule

Offerors shall propose a Pricing and Payment Schedule for the Fixed- Price tasks based on the price per deliverable (Attachment The Department will pay the corresponding invoice only after the Department has accepted each Fixed-Price deliverable.

D. Contract Funding Information

The Department anticipates awarding a hybrid contract through a full and open competition, funded incrementally and Subject to the Availability of Funds.

The Offeror shall submit proposed costs for each task and for the project overall. Costs shall be identified for the base contract and the optional task separately. In other words, costs shall be presented as 2 different budgets:

- Base Contract: Tasks 1-13 for 54 months
- Optional Task: Task 14

The proposed budget for each task shall include the number of hours each staff person is expected to commit. The Government estimates that the overall project level of effort required to undertake the tasks described in the Performance Work Statement is approximately 37,000 hours for the Base 54 month Contract and 1,900 additional hours for Optional Task 14. This information is provided for offeror's information only and shall not be considered restrictive for proposal development purposes.

Offeror's summary budgets shall reflect the budget information on the supporting budget spreadsheets. Offeror's shall provide labels on each spreadsheet to indicate the contents. Offeror's shall provide similar budget information for subcontractors.

In addition to labor costs, the proposed budget for each task and subtask shall also indicate direct charges for materials, supplies, consultants, equipment, telephone, copying, travel, and any other major budget items, as well as indirect cost rates used in preparing the cost estimate. Please provide supporting documentation to explain direct costs. Offeror's also shall include the percentage for fee on the budget sheets when applicable.

The business proposal shall include costs itemized by project year, and the annual rate of escalation shall be clearly stated. In addition, the offeror shall provide a total price per year for the fixed- price tasks and total cost per year for the cost-reimbursement tasks.

E. Cost Realism Evaluation

It is required that the offerors' business proposal contain enough information for a cost realism determination to be made. Offerors are expected to use their best business judgment in submitting the necessary information. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.404-1 states "cost realism means the costs in an Offeror's proposal are a) realistic for the work to be performed; b) reflect a clear understanding of the requirements, and c) are consistent with the various elements of the Offeror's technical proposal."

An official authorized to bind your organization must sign the proposal. The offeror shall include information on the status of your company's accounting system, cost estimating system, and purchasing system. If these systems have been reviewed and approved by a Government Agency, include a copy of the approval letter in the proposal submission. If they have not been approved, please state this fact.

F. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

A copy of the offeror's current indirect rate agreement shall be included with the business proposal. Similar information shall also be submitted for all subcontractors. If the offeror will apply its own indirect rates to subcontractor costs, the offeror must clearly state this intent.

G. Labor Rates

Offerors shall submit their labor rates broken out, not fully loaded. Offerors shall ensure that the labor rate build-up is clearly shown in all proposed budgets. Offerors are permitted to propose discounted rates to improve the competitiveness of their proposal. The labor mix and labor categories proposed shall be consistent with the personnel proposed in the technical proposal.

Consulting rates for each proposed TWG member must be provided in the offeror's business proposal.

H. Notice of Potential Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Interest Mitigation Strategy Instruction

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes that there is a potential conflict of interest (COI) for prospective offerors because many education research organizations applied for and were awarded grants for the Comprehensive Centers ("Comp Centers") Grant Program, or may be serving as subcontractors to a Comp Center grant awardee. In light of this potential conflict, the Department is implementing a two-phase process for the 'Evaluation of the Comprehensive Center Program' procurement. The intent of the Department's two-phase process is to provide prospective offerors with information that

may assist them in making an informed decision about how COI issues may affect their chances of submitting a successful proposal.

Phase 1 requires all interested parties/vendors to submit to the Contracting Officer and Contract Specialist by 12 noon (ET) on March 15, 2013, a written statement indicating whether the respective vendor believes a conflict of interest does/does not exist, along with a rationale supporting its response. Vendors whose responses state that a potential conflict of interest does exist must also provide a draft COI Mitigation Strategy in their written response. The Department will provide feedback directly to each respective vendor on the viability of its respective COI Mitigation Strategy no later than April 5, 2013. **DISCLAIMER:** All information submitted by prospective offerors during Phase 1 shall not be evaluated, scored or rated, but shall be reviewed strictly to allow the Department to provide feedback to vendors.

During Phase 2, offerors who have made the business decision to submit a proposal in response to the Comprehensive Centers Request for Proposals (RFP) are responsible for (1) revising their respective COI Strategy (if applicable), (2) incorporating any feedback provided by the Department (at the offeror's discretion), and (3) submitting a viable COI Plan (inclusive of their proposed mitigation strategy) in the Business Volume of their respective proposal. All offerors must submit a **COI Plan** with their full proposal submission. In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 9.5, the Contracting Officer shall review each offeror's COI Plan and proposed mitigation strategy (as applicable) during the proposal evaluation process, to ensure that any potential conflict is resolved prior to award of a contract for the Comp Center requirement.

*Offerors shall review Appendix A: Instructions for Submission of COI Mitigation Strategy, below for specific guidance and instructions, and provide the completed form (Appendix B) along with the draft COI Mitigation Strategy to the Contract Specialist by the due date, to the following: EMAIL Contract Specialist -- [Sharon.Masciana@ed.gov](mailto:Sharon.Masciana@ed.gov) and copy Contracting Officer -- [Veronica.Price@ed.gov](mailto:Veronica.Price@ed.gov). Be sure to include "Phase 1 COI Form" in the subject line of the email submission.*

#### **Phase 1 - Appendix A: Instructions for Submission of COI Mitigation Strategy**

##### Background:

An organization that has a grant with the Department to run a Comprehensive Center, or has a contractual agreement to provide "relevant services"<sup>1</sup> to a Comprehensive Center, has a conflict of interest (COI). Such an organization would have financial and other interests that would impair, or give the appearance of impairing, impartial judgment if the organization were reviewing Comprehensive Centers' products, including its own products (reference FAR 9.505-3). However, there may be organizations working with the Comprehensive Centers where the nature of their work does not pose a conflict of

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<sup>1</sup> "Relevant services" are services related to the Comprehensive Centers' technical assistance work that would cause a conflict of interest that cannot be mitigated or neutralized in an effort to appropriately perform the work required in this procurement.



interest in performing the Comprehensive Centers Evaluation requirement; or organizations may be able to develop acceptable plans for mitigating existing conflicts. The Department of Education recognizes, however, that the risk of elimination during the competitive acquisition process due to COI may prevent some potential offerors from committing resources to proposal development.

Phase 1 of this two-phase process is designed to reduce aforementioned risk for potential offerors. Vendors will receive an assessment on their conflict of interest mitigation strategies before they are required to commit resources to the development of a complete proposal. However, Phase 1 of this process is not meant to be, should not be construed as, and will not be used as, a definitive assessment of whether a conflict of interest can or cannot be mitigated. Instead, Phase 1 is an opportunity for vendors to receive feedback from the Department on initial concerns related to their COI Mitigation Strategy. The Department will not make a determination of COI, but instead provide feedback on areas of concern that remain based on the draft COI mitigation strategy submitted. It is in the vendors' best interest to provide as much detail as possible in order for the Department to give an informed and useful response to the vendor.

Instructions:

Potential offerors are required to submit Appendix B by 12 Noon (ET) March 15, 2013, to the Department of Education which states that either (1) no apparent potential conflict of interest exists and includes a supporting rationale, or (2) an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists, but can potentially be mitigated through steps described in the accompanying draft COI mitigation strategy. The mitigation strategy shall include a description of the nature of the COI; the specific strategy for mitigating the COI; and a discussion of how the proposed strategy will ensure that the COI is mitigated. When the potential conflict is directly related to a particular task in the PWS the vendor shall provide a brief description of how the vendor plans to carry out the task in order for ED to fully understand the potential conflict. In addition, as feedback from ED will be based on the amount of information provided, the vendor should name individuals or organizations whenever feasible to do so, in order for ED to assess the potential of remaining or new COI issues. The names provided in Phase 1 *will not be viewed* as a commitment of these individuals or organizations to participate in Phase 2. The draft COI mitigation strategy shall not exceed 2,000 words.

On April 5, 2013, the Department will provide a response memo to each potential offeror assessing the viability of the vendor's specific mitigation strategy (as applicable). Regardless of the Department's response, all vendors who submit the form and draft COI mitigation strategy (as applicable) may submit a proposal for this procurement. Vendors who do not submit a Phase I draft COI mitigation strategy may also submit a proposal. The Department understands that the mitigation strategies are drafts only and may be modified or updated prior to submission of an offeror's proposal. Potential offerors are cautioned to affix appropriate language or a disclaimer regarding the sensitivity of information provided during Phase 1, indicating whether or not the Department should protect such information from public disclosure.

**Phase 1: Appendix B:**  
**Conflict of Interest Statement Form**

Response due date: March 15, 2013

Date:

Organization Name:

Contact Name and Title:

Contact Email:

Contact Telephone Number

Please check one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Our organization has no actual, apparent, or potential Conflict of Interest that would adversely our ability to fully execute the Comprehensive Center Evaluation requirement, and our rationale for this response is attached. (Rationale shall not exceed 750 words)

\_\_\_\_\_ Our organization has an actual, apparent, or potential Conflict of Interest with the Comprehensive Center Evaluation. However, we believe we can successfully mitigate the conflict by implementing the attached COI mitigation strategy. (Mitigation strategy shall not exceed 2000 words)

**III. Volume III. - Past Performance**

- A. Each offeror shall provide four relevant past performance references for projects of similar size and scope, either commercial or federal contracts (task orders), awarded to the Offeror or subcontract. The references shall include the following information:
- Offeror's Name (Company/Division)
  - Contract Number and Contract Type
  - Contracting Agency or Business (FAA, NASA, State of Texas, Mobil Oil, etc.)
  - Original contract dollar value and final contract dollar value (including options)
  - Original completion date and final (or current) completion date
  - A description of the contract effort
  - The relevance of this contract to the current procurement
  - Performance experience summary
  - Description of the performance measures and the performance results against those measures
  - For Government contracts, provide the name, address, telephone and fax number for the Contracting Officer (procuring or administrative), Contracting Officer's Technical Representative and Project Manager; For nongovernment contracts, provide the name, address, telephone and fax number of business point of contact, project manager, liaison, etc.
  - Offerors shall address problems encountered and corrective actions taken as well as performance successes (e.g., technical innovations, awards, etc.) experienced during the contracts listed above.

The Government reserves the right to contact past performance references to verify the information provided in a separate volume. The Government also reserves the right to obtain past performance information from other sources (i.e. CPARS).

**B. Offeror and Subcontractor References**

In accordance with Section L clause 314-1 Past Performance Report, offerors shall submit narrative information about their most recent four contracts in a separate Past Performance Report, completed in the last three years or currently in process but beyond the first year of the contract, which are of similar size, scope, complexity or, in any way, are relevant to the effort required by this solicitation. The four contracts may include those entered into with the Federal Government, agencies of State and local governments and commercial customers. Contracts with the parent or an affiliate of the offeror may not be used.

Offerors shall also provide a complete list of the title, contract or grant number, award date, end date, and dollar amount of all contracts and grants with the U.S. Department of Education that are current or ended after October 1, 2010. This list shall be provided for



any proposed subcontractors and consultants as well as for the proposed prime contractor. For contracts or grants directly relevant to this procurement—either as a basis for corporate qualifications or as a source of potential conflicts of interest—a brief summary of the contract or grant activities shall also be provided.

C. Past Performance Forms from References

In addition to the abovementioned Past Performance information included in the Technical Proposal, the "Vendor Past Performance" form (Attachment D) shall be used by the offeror to solicit information from four (4) references. These references shall submit their past performance forms directly to the Government. Consideration of the offeror's reputation in terms of quality, problem resolution, cost control, timeliness, business relations and customer service will be evaluated.

Each offeror's reference shall complete the Vendor Past Performance form and return it to the Contract Specialist, Sharon Masciana, as prescribed on the form. Completed forms from references are due on the same day as Technical & Business Proposals under this solicitation. Offerors should direct entity's providing references on their behalf to submit the completed form to the Contract Specialist by the due date, to the following: EMAIL Contract Specialist -- [Sharon.Masciana@ed.gov](mailto:Sharon.Masciana@ed.gov) and copy Contracting Officer -- [Veronica.Price@ed.gov](mailto:Veronica.Price@ed.gov)

NOTE: Please include in the Email Subject line: Reference for RFP ED-IES-12-R-0103, Evaluation of Comprehensive Centers

D. Small Business Subcontracting Plan

Offerors must submit a small business subcontracting plan (Plan) to include large and small businesses, in accordance with 48 CFR, 19.702 Statutory Requirements, with the business proposal. Offerors shall state the type of work to be performed by large and small businesses and the percentage of work proposed to be performed by each subcontractors. The offeror shall also state the name of each business and type of business concern -- other than small or small.

The Department's current small business subcontracting goals for 2013 are as follows:

- i. Small Business 43.5%
- ii. Small disadvantaged business concerns 5%
- iii. Women-owned small business concerns 5%
- iv. HUBZone small business concerns 3%
- v. Service Disabled Veteran Owned small business concerns 3%

These targets are the *minimum* acceptable percentages for each subcontracting plan. The categories listed above imply no order of preference. The goals are a percentage of total subcontract dollars. The Department values an approach where substantive work in a meaningful capacity is performed by small businesses more highly than an approach in

which only menial work or supply line work is performed by small businesses. A meaningful capacity for substantive work includes work other than courier services, office supplies or travel services. Therefore, a valued approach for this anticipated contract will be one in which technical, analytical, or significant service is performed by small businesses. All Plans shall explicitly reflect the efforts made by the vendor to identify a diverse, small business subcontractor pool. A thorough justification must be provided when the plan fails to meet the minimum goals.

#### Section L. 314-1 PAST PERFORMANCE REPORT INSTRUCTIONS

Each offeror shall submit the following information as a separately bound part of its proposal for both the offeror and proposed major subcontractors. Major, as defined here and in the remainder of sections L and M regarding past performance, is any subcontractor that is subcontracted for a minimum of 25% of the total contract amount. Each major subcontractor shall identify the name of the prime contractor on each of its past performance forms. If the offeror has no relevant corporate or organizational past performance, the offeror may substitute past performance of a predecessor company or of the offeror's management or proposed key personnel who have relevant experience.

A. Each offeror shall submit information about its most recent four contracts, completed in the last three years or currently in process, which are of similar size, scope, complexity or, in any way, are relevant to the effort required by this solicitation. If the offeror's last four similar contracts are all currently in process, submit the last three similar contracts currently in process, and the most recent similar contract completed within the last three years. Contracts listed may include those entered into by the Federal Government, agencies of State and local governments and commercial customers. Contracts with the parent or an affiliate of the offeror may not be used.

Include the following information for each contract and subcontract: 1. Identification a. Name of the contracting activity b. Program title or product name c. Contract number d. Contract type e. Period of performance, including all option periods f. Contract Value: (1) Initial projected total contract amount including all option periods (2) Final or current projected total contract amount including all option periods g. Points of Contact (1) Contracting officer and telephone and fax number and e-mail address (if known) (2) Administrative contracting officer, if different from above, and telephone and fax number and e-mail address (if known) (3) Program manager, COR or technical officer and telephone and fax number and e-mail address (if known) 2. Work performed and relevance a. Brief synopsis of work performed b. Brief discussion of how the work performed is relevant to the statement of work in this solicitation c. Brief, specific examples of the offeror's high quality performance 3. If any of the listed contracts are award-fee or incentive contracts, include a table showing fees awarded and the minimum and maximum available fee for each period. 4. Paragraph E. below requires you to send a copy of the "Contractor Information Form" to each of your references. In your past performance report, include: a. The date you sent the "Contractor Information Form" to each reference. b. How you sent

it (e.g., fax, mail, express delivery service, courier, e-mail, etc.). c. To whom you sent it including telephone and fax number and e-mail address (if known).

B. The offeror may provide information on problems encountered on the contracts and subcontracts identified in A above and corrective actions taken to resolve those problems. Other than the information requested in A above, offerors should not provide general information on their performance on the identified contracts. General performance information will be obtained from the references.

C. Offerors should understand the difference between experience and past performance. Experience reflects the offeror's capability of performing a requirement. Past performance reflects how well it has performed similar requirements. In assessing past performance, the quality of the offeror's past performance is of primary significance, not the quantity of previous contracts performed. An offeror's experience will be evaluated in the technical proposal. For further guidance on including information on experience or how experience will be evaluated refer to the technical proposal instructions and evaluation criteria.

D. The offeror may describe any quality awards or certifications that indicate the offeror possesses a high-quality process for developing and producing the product or service required. Such awards or certifications include, for example, the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award, other government quality awards, and private sector awards or certifications (e.g., the automobile industry's QS 9000, Sematech's SSQA, or ANSI/EIA-599). Identify which segment of the company (one division or the entire company) received the award or certification. Describe when the award or certification was bestowed. If the award or certification is over three years old, present evidence that the qualifications still apply. Information about awards will be considered in evaluation of each of the past performance subfactors described in Section M. The offeror may describe how the award relates to one or more of the subfactors.

E. No later than the date proposals are due under this solicitation (see Block 9 of Standard Form 33), send a copy to each of the four references you've selected of the "Contractor Performance Information" form attached to this solicitation. Ask each reference to complete the form and return it to the contracting officer as prescribed on the form. Completed forms from references are due on the closing date of the RFP.



## SECTION M.2 REVISED EVALUATION CRITERIA

### 312-2 EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD (MAY 2004)

The Government will make award to the responsible offeror(s) whose offer conforms to the solicitation, has no deficiencies (as defined in FAR 15.001) and is most advantageous to the Government, cost or price and other factors considered. For this solicitation, price will be a substantial factor in source selection, however quality factors (including technical merit and past performance), considered together, are significantly more important than cost or price. The contracting officer will determine whether the difference in quality is worth the difference in cost or price. Technical Evaluation Criteria: In accordance with the technical evaluation criteria, technical solutions that exceed any mandatory minimums will be given appropriate evaluation.

#### Comprehensive Center Technical Evaluation Criteria

*The U.S. Department of Education will determine Technical Merit ratings for individual proposals using the 160 point rating scale associated with the following technical evaluation factors:*

##### A. Soundness of the Technical Approach – 50 points

- 1) The technical proposal provides a demonstrated understanding of the purpose and context of the evaluation requirement, the major issues and study objectives, and how each task (in connection with all others) contributes to meeting the study objectives. Credible information and evidence are provided which indicate that the intent of all requirements in the PWS will be clearly met.
- 2) The technical proposal provides *clear, detailed, and thorough descriptions* of the activities that will be conducted to accomplish each task. The proposal provides *credible evidence* that the proposed activities will be of high quality, feasible, and appropriate for the intent of each task, and the overall study.
- 3) The offeror proposes the most rigorous evaluation methods available to produce useful and relevant results that will potentially lead to improved technical assistance efforts. The proposal demonstrates creativity, flexibility, and commitment to improving the evaluation strategy over time.

##### B. Technical Qualifications of Proposed Personnel and Corporate Experience -- 20 Points (Discussed in text and supported by Appendices E and F)

- 1) The proposal provides clear evidence that the offeror's proposed team, inclusive of a Project Director, key personnel and project staff, possesses the experience, technical training, and other qualifications that are appropriate for the task assignments, including the following:
  - a. experience and skill in designing and conducting evaluations using methods relevant to the contract,
  - b. experience and skill in evaluating technical assistance activities,

- c. experience and skill in providing independent review and evaluation of products and services,
- d. substantive knowledge of a range of current education issues and issues facing education policymakers and practitioners, and
- e. substantive knowledge and experience working with State Education Agencies (SEAs).

2) Evidence of prior successful corporate experience in designing and conducting evaluations of similar complexity, scope, and methodology as described in the PWS.

3) Evidence of prior successful corporate experience in providing review and evaluation of technical assistance service and products.

4) Evidence of prior successful corporate experience in writing about research and findings for a range of audiences, including practitioners and policymakers.

**C. Management Plan, Quality Control, and Study Procedures -- 15 Points**

Feasible and efficient procedures are proposed for the following management activities:

- a. coordinating and connecting all tasks together in order to effectively meet PWS requirements
- b. coordinating the work of sub-contractors, consultants, and subject matter experts
- c. ensuring that the quality of deliverables meets acceptable standards as outlined in the PWS
- d. ensuring timely submission of work products, deliverables and services

**D. Demonstrated Skill and Expertise in Appendices A through D-- 40 points**

- 1) Presented a list of well qualified experts to serve on the Technical Working Group (TWG) and provided a compelling rationale for their potential contribution to the Department (Appendix A).
- 2) Demonstrated skill and expertise for Task 6 and Task 11 through high quality and relevant exemplars of a customer satisfaction survey and sample formative report (Appendices B & C).
- 4) Proposed a feasible, useful, and relevant study for Task 14 to supplement the currently proposed study. (Appendix D)

**E. Past performance -- 25 points**

The offerors past performance evaluations and references contain clear evidence that the work cited in each evaluation or reference is relevant, and similar in nature, size, scope and complexity to the requirement. The past performance information contains concrete information on the following areas (that are of equal importance) which allow for a clear assessment of the offerors past performance as it relates to the execution of this requirement.

- 1) Quality of Product or Service
- 2) Problem Resolution
- 3) Cost Control
- 4) Timeliness of Performance
- 5) Business Relations
- 6) Customer Service

**F. Substantive Small Business Participation - 10 points**

A subcontracting plan should propose substantive work in a meaningful capacity be subcontracted to a Small Business, Small Disadvantaged Business, Woman-Owned Small Business, HUBZone Small Business or Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business. A meaningful capacity for substantive work as described here includes work other than courier services, office supplies or travel services. A meaningful capacity is one in which small businesses are doing actual work under a particular task that is part of the contract and for which the small business has appropriate qualifications. Substantial work means work that is critical to the overall functions and goals of the project.

A subcontracting plan that proposes substantive work in a meaningful capacity to be subcontracted to small businesses qualified to conduct the work, proposes more than 43.5% of subcontract dollars be subcontracted to small businesses, and the subcontracting targets meet or exceed the Department's minimum acceptable percentages for each socioeconomic category may receive up to the maximum total 10 points.

**Total Available Points For the Technical Evaluation: 160 Points**